

E 206

.C67

Copy 2













C334  
293  
THE

LIVES AND SERVICES

OF

MAJOR GENERAL JOHN THOMAS,  
COLONEL THOMAS KNOWLTON,  
COLONEL ALEXANDER SCAMMELL,  
MAJOR GENERAL HENRY DEARBORN.

~~~~~  
COMPILED BY CHARLES COFFIN.  
~~~~~

NEW-YORK :

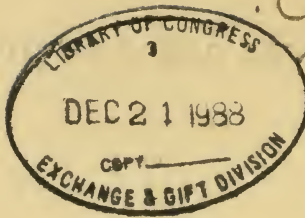
EGBERT, HOVEY & KING, PRINTERS, 374 PEARL-STREET.

1845.

E206

.C67

copy 2





## P R E F A C E .

---

HAVING long been satisfied from the general history of the Revolution, that no officer deserved the esteem and respect of his country, more than General Thomas, I have been led to look more particularly into the grounds of the high estimation in which he was held by Washington, Congress, the army and the country, and am satisfied his fame was not ephemeral, but well founded.

In this inquiry, valuable letters from Generals Washington, Lee, and Schuyler, and from John Adams, never before published, have come to light, and are of such value, connected with the early movements of the Revolution, as to induce my consent that the whole should be published.

THE COMPILER.

*New-York, March, 1845*



## MAJOR GENERAL JOHN THOMAS.

---

THE determination of the mind to relinquish the soft scenes of tranquil life for the rough adventures of war, is generally attended with the conviction that the act is laudable ; and with the wish, that its honorable exertions should be faithfully transmitted to posterity. These sentiments lead to the cultivation of virtue ; and the effect of the one is magnified by the accomplishment of the other.

In usefulness to society, the degree is inconsiderable between the conduct of him who performs great actions, and of him who records them ; for short must be the remembrance, circumscribed the influence of patriotic exertions and heroic exploits, unless the patient historian retrieves them from oblivion, and holds them up conspicuously to future ages. Whenever the images of the great men of the commonwealth are beheld, the mind is excited to virtue. It cannot be the wax or the marble which possesses this power, but the recollection of their great actions kindling a generous flame in the breast, not to be quelled, till by virtue, equal fame and glory is acquired. Regretting as all do, that even the names, much less the deeds, of some of the principal actors in our contest for Independence, are scarcely known by their posterity.

I have been led to this, my present undertaking with the hope of contributing in some degree to repair the effects of this much lamented indifference.

With this view, I am about to write the memoirs of the person whose name is at the head of this article. It is at once discovered that the task will not be easy in itself, nor will it be entirely satisfactory in the performance. The causes which render it difficult in this case, are no doubt, in some measure similar in all like attempts. The companions of General Thomas, in civil, professional and military life, have long since passed away, more than sixty-eight years having elapsed since his death. The confidential officers about his person, at his death, in a foreign province, overcome with the event, and occupied with the necessary attention to their official duties, in an army prostrate with sickness of the most malignant kind and on a retreat in an enemies country, pursued by a well appointed army flushed with success, and commanded by a consummate general, did not, and could not have given that attention to the safe keeping of the private papers of their general, which would have aided in the performance of the task imposed.

On the part of his descendants it is admitted and regretted, that less care and attention has been given than should have been, to the preservation of those family records and traditions, which would have gone far to have made this memoir the more complete and interesting, and rendered the life and services of their ancestor more conspicuous and useful. The apprehension which seems to have influenced them, that they might be considered



desirous to blazon the fame of their ancestor, was not a sufficient reason or excuse, for they should have considered, as they must have known, that he was an honored and cherished son of the Republic. They should have constituted themselves the guardians of his fame, as well for themselves, as for their country and future ages. But what would seem almost incredible, is, that not even a newspaper sketch has ever been published of the services of General Thomas, to which reference could be had. But the facts within reach, and which have come to hand, are such, that they cannot mislead. With the materials which remain, the undertaking will proceed, with the assurance, that biography shall not be turned to eulogy nor history to romance.

General Thomas was of English descent. His direct ancestor arrived in the old colony of Plymouth in the year one thousand six hundred and twenty-one, the next year after the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, and immediately took up his residence in the present town of Marshfield, in the county of Plymouth, where the subject of this memoir was born in the year 1724. Of his first ancestor and his immediate descendants, little is now known further than that their time must have been principally occupied in obtaining the necessaries of life, food and raiment, in that then dreary and inhospitable wilderness. It is however known that his grand-father and father, who both bore the name of John, were substantial farmers and leading men in the town with the Winslows and Whites.

After a suitable preliminary education, he became a

medical student with Dr. Cotton Tufts, of Medford, in the vicinity of Boston, a distinguished Physician ; for at that time there were no medical colleges in Massachusetts or New England. On completing his medical education, Dr. Thomas commenced practice in his native town, but in a few years removed to Kingston, in the same county, where he continued in his profession till his death, except when connected with the army. As a physician he was not only skilful, but eminently successful. In March, 1746, he was appointed and commissioned as second surgeon in a body of troops raised in Massachusetts, to be stationed at Annapolis Royal. In February, 1755, he was appointed Surgeon's mate in Shirley's regiment, but soon left the medical staff, and was appointed a lieutenant in the same regiment the same year. In the year 1759, he was appointed a colonel, and re-appointed to the same office 1760, by Governor Pownall of the Massachusetts government. Whether he ever served in any of the intermediate grades in the army does not appear ; it is highly probable he did. It appears by his petition to the Governor and Council of Massachusetts, that he commanded his regiment part of both these years in Nova Scotia. In the year 1760, with his regiment, he joined the Anglo-American army at Crown Point, commanded by General Amherst, commander-in-chief of all the forces in North America. After the many defeats of the British and American arms, in the first years of the old French war, under the successive commands of Braddock, Shirley, Johnson, Lord Laudon and Abercrombie, the energetic Pitt, then Prime Minister of En-

gland, withdrew them all, and called Colonel Amherst from the army in Germany, and promoted him to the command in North America, with such men as Wolf, Moncton, Townsend and Murray under him.

This year completed the conquest of Canada, and in his well arranged plans and movements against Montreal, where the whole force of the French in that province was assembled, Colonel Thomas had an honorable and important command. The celebrated Major Rogers, who commanded the partizan corps, called the Rangers' published a journal of all the campaigns of that war, which was printed in London in 1765; the volume is now rarely to be found and should be reprinted. The following is from his journal. "I remained at Crown Point with my people, without effecting anything considerable, more than small parties reconnoitering the country about the Fort, while every thing was got in readiness for embarking the army on the 16th of August, [1760,] which was done accordingly; having one brig, three sloop, and four rideaux, which latter were occupied by the Royal Train of Artillery, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Ord.

Our march was as follows, viz : six hundred Rangers and seventy Indians, as an advanced guard for the whole army, all in a line abreast, about half a mile ahead of the main body, followed by the light Infantry and Grenadiers in two boats abreast in each column, commanded by Colonel Darby.

The right wing was composed of Provincials, commanded by Brigadier Ruggles, who was second in com-

mand of the whole army. The left was made up of the New Hampshire and Boston [Massachusetts] troops, commanded by Colonel Thomas. The seventeenth and twenty-seventh regiments, with some few of the royals that formed the centre column, were commanded by Major Campbell, of the seventeenth regiment. Colonel Haviland was in front of these divisions, between that and the light infantry and grenadiers. The royal artillery followed the columns and was commanded Colonel Ord, who had for his escort, one Rhode Island regiment of Provincials. The suttlers, &c. followed the artillery. In this manner we rowed down the Lake [Champlain] forty miles the first day, putting ashore where there was good landing on the west side, and there encamped. The following day we lay by. The 18th, the wind blowing at south, orders were given for embarking, and the same day reached a place on the west shore, within ten miles of the Isle *a Mot*, where the army encamped. It having blown a fresh gale most of the day, some of my boats split open by the force of the waves, and ten of my Rangers were thereby drowned. The 19th, we set sail early in the morning, and that night encamped on the north end of the Isle *a Mot*. The 20th, before day, the army was under way with intention to land; having but twenty miles to go, and having a fair wind, we soon came in sight of the French fort, and about ten in the morning, Colonel Darby, with the grenadiers and light infantry, and myself with the Rangers, landed on the east shore, without the least opposition.

Having done this, an officer was sent to acquaint



Colonel Haviland, who, with the remainder of the army, was at the place where we landed) that there was not the least danger to be apprehended from the enemy. The next day we began to raise batteries, and soon after threw some shells into the garrison. About the 24th, a proposal was made for taking the enemies vessels, three of which were at anchor a little below the fort, and some of their rideaux likewise. It was introduced by Colonel Darby, who was ordered to take the command of the party appointed for this service, which consisted of two companies of Regulars, four companies of my Rangers, with the Indians.

We carried with us two howitzers and one six pounder, and silently conveying them along through the trees, brought them opposite the vessels, and began a brisk fire upon them, before they were the least apprised of our design, and, by good fortune the first shot from the six pounder cut the cable of the great rideaux, and the wind, being at west, blew her to the east shore, where we were, and the other vessels weighed anchor and made for St Johns, but got all aground, in turning a point about two miles below the fort. I was by Colonel Darby, ordered down the east shore with my Rangers, and crossed a river about thirty yards wide which falls into Lake Champlain from the east. I soon got opposite the vessels, and by firing from the shore, gave an opportunity to some of my party to swim on board with their tomahawks, and took one of the vessels; in the mean time Colonel Darby had got on board the rideaux, and had her manned, and took the other two; of which success he immediately

informed Colonel Haviland, who sent down a sufficient number of men to take charge of, and man the vessels; and ordered the remainder of the Rangers, Light Infantry and Grenadiers, to join the army that night, which was accordingly done; and about midnight the night following the French troops left the Island, and landed safe on the main, so that next morning nothing of them was to be seen but a few sick, and Colonel Haviland took possession of the fort.

The second day after the departure of Monsieur Bonville and his troops from the Island, Colonel Haviland sent me with my Rangers to pursue them as far as St. Johns' Fort, which was about twenty miles further down the lake, and at that place I was to wait the arrival of the army, but by no means to follow further than that fort, nor run any risk of advancing further towards Montreal. I went in boats, and about day light got to St. Johns, and found it set on fire. I pursued and took two prisoners, who reported, "That Monsieur Bonville was to encamp that night about half way on the road to Montreal; and that he went from St. Johns about nine o'clock the night before; but that many of their men were sick, and that they thought "some of the troops would not reach the place appointed till the middle of the afternoon."

It being now about seven in the morning, I set all hands to work, except proper guards, to fortify the log houses that stood near the Lake side, in order that part of my people might cover the batteaux, while I, with the remainder, followed Monsieur Bonville, and about eight o'clock I got so well fortified, that I ventured my boats

and baggage under the care of 200 Rangers, and took with me 400 together with two companies of Indians, and followed after the French army, which consisted of about 1500, and about 100 Indians they had to guard them. I was resolved to make his dance a little the merrier, and pursued with such haste, that I overtook his rear guard about two miles before they got to their encamping ground. I immediately attacked them, who not being above 200, suddenly broke, and then stood for the main body, which I very eagerly pursued, but in good order, expecting Monsieur Bonville would have made a stand, which however he did not choose, but pushed forward to get to the river, where they were to encamp, and having crossed it pulled up the bridge, which put a stop to my march, not judging it prudent to cross at a disadvantage, inasmuch as the enemy had a good breastwork on the other side, of which they took possession ; in the pursuit, however, we considerably lessened their number, and returned in safety. In the evening Mr. Haviland came in sight, and landed at St. Johns. As soon as he came on shore, I waited on him and acquainted him with what I had done &c. and that I had two prisoners for him ; he said it was very well and ordered his troops to encamp there that night, and next day went down to the river Sorriél, as far as St. d' Etresé, where he encamped, and made a strong breastwork to defend his people from being surprised.

I was sent down the river Sorriél, to bring the inhabitants under subjection to his Britannic Majesty, and went into their settled country in the night and took all the priests and militia officers, and sent some of them for the

inhabitants. The first day I caused all the inhabitants near Chamblee to take the oaths of allegiance, &c., who appeared glad to have it in their power to take the oath and keep their possessions, and were all extremely submissive.

Having obliged them to bring in their arms, and fulfilled my instructions in the best manner I could, I joined Colonel Darby at Chamblee, who had come there to take the fort and had brought with him some light cannon. It soon surrendered, as the garrison consisted only of about fifty men. This happened on the first of September.

On the 2d., our army having nothing to do, and having good intelligence both from General Amherst, and General Murray, Mr. Haviland sent me to join the latter, while he marched with the rest of the army for La Pierm. The 5th., in the morning I got to Longville, about four miles below Montreal, opposite to where Brigadier Murray lay, and gave him notice of my arrival, but not till the morning of the 6th., by reason of my arrival so late. By the time I came to Longville, the army, under the command of General Amherst, had landed about two miles from the town, where they encamped ; and early in the morning Monsieur de Vaudrieul, the Governor and Commander in Chief, of all Canada, sent to capitulate with our General, which put a stop to all our movements, till the 8th of September, when the articles of capitulation were agreed to and signed, and our troops took possession of the town gates that night. Next morning the Light Infantry and Grenadiers of the whole army,



under command of Colonel Haldiman, with a company of Royal Artillery, with two pieces of cannon, and some howitzers, entered the town, retaining the English colors belonging to Pepperill's and Shirley's regiments which had been taken by the French at Oswego. Thus at length, at the end of the fifth campaign, Montreal and the whole country of Canada was given up, and became subject to the King of Great Britain; a conquest perhaps of the greatest importance that is to be met with in the British annals, whether we consider the prodigious extent of country we are hereby made masters of, the vast addition it must make to trade and navigation, or the security it must afford to the northern provinces of America, particularly those flourishing ones of New England and New York, the irretrievable loss France sustains thereby, and the importance it must give the British crown among the several states of Europe. All this, I say, duly considered, will perhaps, in its consequences render the year 1760 more glorious than any preceding. And to this acquisition, had we during the late war, either by conquest or treaty, added the fertile and extensive country of Louisiana, we should have been possessed of perhaps the most valuable territory upon the face of the globe, attended with more real advantages than the so much boasted mines of Mexico and Peru, and would have forever deprived the French, those treacherous rivals of Britain's glory of an opportunity of acting hereafter the same perfidious parts they have already so often repeated."

To the gallant and hardy soldier, Rogers adds the

reflections of the Statesman. On the 12th of September, General Amherst, by a written order, directed Rogers to take two hundred men, and proceed to the French forts of Detroit and *Michilimackina* and all others in that direction, receive their submission and take possession. In pursuance of this order, Rogers embarked at Montreal on the 13th of September, and in obedience to his orders traversed a country by land and water, filled with hostile Indians, and performed this service to the entire satisfaction of his commander. On his return, January 23d, 1761, he reached the Ohio opposite Fort Pitt, from whence he ordered Lieutenant Mc Cormick to march the party across the country to Albany and came himself by the common road to Philadelphia, from thence to New York, where, after his long, fatiguing tour, he arrived on the 14th of February, 1761; which ends his journey and journal. He was engaged in this delicate and hazardous enterprize five months and one day; the whole account is of great interest, even at this day, and is well and plainly related.

The campaign of 1760 closed the military career of Colonel Thomas, as connected with the British crown, and many distinguished officers of that war, among whom was Major Robert Rogers. Major Rogers was a native of the interior of New Hampshire, the vicinity of Concord, and was the right arm of all the English commanders who served in that war, obtained their entire confidence, and at the close of the war, was placed on half pay, and was employed in Canada, partly in a military, and partly in a civil

capacity, but soon went to England where he published his journal, of which the British reviewers of that day, say, "Journals of Major Robert Rogers ; containing an account of the several excursions he made, under the Generals who commanded on the continent of America, during the late war, from which may be collected the most material circumstances of every campaign on the continent, from the commencement to the conclusion of the war. The author writes like an honest, sensible, and modest man ; and has given, throughout his whole account, undoubted proofs that he is a brave and skilful officer. He headed with much reputation, the provincial troops called Rangers, during the whole course of what were called the *French* wars in America."

On the authority of General Starke, who served under him during the whole French war, "Rogers was a man of great presence of mind, intrepidity and perseverance in the accomplishment of his plans ; and would no doubt have acted a distinguished part in the Revolution, had he chosen the side of the people. He was a man six feet in height, well proportioned, and one of the most active and athletic men of his time. The Indians entertained a great dread of him, and with very good reason." He returned to this country in 1775, and visited Cambridge and Medford, then occupied by the continental troops. Washington refused him permission to enter the camp, but Starke and others of his old companions in arms, visited him at his Hotel at Medford. He afterwards joined Sir William Howe at New York, by whom he was appointed a colonel ; but in a short time returned to

England and never visited this country again. General Ruggles, was a distinguished lawyer, and many years a leading man in the Legislature of Massachusetts, but before the Revolution voted and acted with the tories, and left the country when Howe left Boston, and never returned. Both Ruggles and Rogers, joined the British in the contest for Independence, and took an active part against their native country and in favor of the king to whom they had sworn allegiance.

General Amherst, the commander-in chief in 1760, moved against Montreal with an army of all arms, 10,868 effective, by Oswego over Lake Ontario, and down the river St. Lawrence, starting from Crown Point. General Haviland moved from the same place, by way of Lake Champlain, as related by Rogers, with whom Ruggles, Thomas and Rogers marched with a force of 3,500, while General Murray led an army from Quebec against the same place amounting to 4,400 ; the whole three combined amounted to 18,748 effectives. The three armies arrived within striking distance of Montreal within twenty four hours of each other. Governor Vaudrieul at first determined to fight Amherst, but on ascertaining that Murray and Haviland had arrived, abandoned his first determination, and surrendered the city and Province on honorable terms for the military, and favorable to the citizens. General Amherst's military character must be generally known in America, but the origin and progress of his career, which led to the rank he attained and the esteem in which he was held, may not be familiar to the American reader.



He was the son of Jeffery Amherst, a distinguished Barrister at law ; and in 1731, at the age of fourteen, he entered the army as an Ensign. At the age of twenty-four, was aid to Lord Ligonier, at the battles of Racoux, Dettengen and Fontenoy. Subsequently aid to the Duke of Cumberland, and with him at the battles of Laffeldt and Hastenbeck. In 1758, made Major General and commander in America and took Louisburgh and Crown Point. In 1760, as has been seen took Montreal, in which he discovered the prudent and consummate General. In consideration of these services, was created Knight of the Bath, and made Governor of Virginia. In 1763 he returned to England. In 1768, for a short time there was a coldness towards him on the part of the King, and he dismissed from all employment, but the same year he was restored to favor and received redoubled honors.

In a few succeeding years he was Lieutenant General of ordinance, Governor of Guernsey, Commander-in-chief, sworn of the Privy Council, and Baron of Holmsdale in Kent, and last Baron of Montreal. In 1795, he was removed from command to make room for the Duke of York : on this occasion, an Earldom and rank of Field Marshal was offered him, but he declined them. But in 1796, he received the Field Marshal's office, and died in 1797, in the eighty-first year of his age, having served his country in every military grade more than sixty-six years, and received the highest honors that the country could bestow on a subject. His personal qualities were highly estimable : as a commander he was a firm and rigid disciplinarian, but ever the soldier's friend and ready

to hear and redress the complaints of those under him. The honor of the nation whose battles he fought, seemed to be the predominant principle of his military career. Lord Amherst had a brother who attained the rank of admiral of the blue ; and a brother William, who served under him in America, who attained the rank of Lieutenant General, aid de camp to the King, and Adjutant General to his Majesty's forces. A pillar was erected at Montreal in Kent, to commemorate an unexpected meeting of the three brothers in 1764, after a six years absence, and of war, in which the three were successfully engaged in various climes, seasons and services.

Lord Amherst lived to see the country for which he had fought, arrayed in arms against his king, and many who had served under him, high in command, and compelling a British army to leave Boston, and in possession of Montreal, his last conquest in this country. It was fortunate for America that he was not ordered to command against her. Under such a leader Col. Thomas received his first lessons in war, and profited by his teaching. From this time to 1775, Col. Thomas continued engaged in his profession at Kingston, where the revolution found him, in the enjoyment of domestic happiness, professional distinction, and well-earned military fame.

In the month of February, the Provincial Congress passed the following resolution : "In Provincial Congress, Cambridge, February 9th, 1775 : Resolved, That the Hon. Jedediah Preble Esq., Hon. Artemas Ward Esq., Col. Seth Pomery, Col. John Thomas, and Col. William



Heath, be, and hereby are appointed General Officers." The gallant and veteran General Preble, of Portland, father of the distinguished naval commander, Edward Preble, declined the service. It is believed he was induced to this course from his advanced age; the others all accepted. The accurate biographer, Dr. John Eliot, in a note to a memoir of Gen. Sullivan, says of Gen. Thomas, "he was an officer who had acquired reputation in the French War. He was one of the best officers in our army in 1775, and commanded the division nearest the British lines in Roxbury. A more brave, beloved and distinguished character did not go into the field, nor was there a man that made a greater sacrifice of his own ease, health and social enjoyments." Previous to the battle of Lexington, the Provincial Congress created the office of Lieutenant General, and appointed Thomas to the office, which gave him the rank of Pomeroy. After the battle of Lexington, Ward was commander-in-chief, and had his head-quarters at Cambridge, while Thomas commanded on the Roxbury side as Lieutenant General. Soon after this, the Continental Congress assumed the army assembled at Cambridge, as the army of the United Colonies, and appointed the general officers to command the same. Among these, after Washington, were four Major Generals, eight Brigadiers, and an Adjutant General. Ward being the only Major General Massachusetts was entitled to, Thomas should have been the first Brigadier of the army, and is so called in his commission, but the date gave Pomeroy and Heath precedence. This difficulty, with others of a similar char-

acter, and the result of them, are explained by Washington, in an extract from his first letter to Congress, dated Cambridge camp, July 10th, 1775.

“I am very sorry to observe, that the appointment of General officers, in the provinces of Massachusetts and Connecticut, has not corresponded with the wishes or judgment either of the civil or military. The great dissatisfaction expressed on this subject, and the apparent danger of throwing the whole army into the utmost disorder, together with the strong representations made by the Provincial Congress, have induced me to retain the commissions in my hands until the pleasure of the Continental Congress should be further known, except General Putnam’s, which was given him the day I came to camp, and before I was apprised of these disgusts.

In such a step, I must beg the Congress will do me the justice to believe, that I have been actuated solely by a regard to the public good. I have not, nor could I have, any private attachments—every gentleman in the appointment was a stranger to me, but from character; I must therefore, rely upon the candor and indulgence of Congress, for their most favorable construction of my conduct in this particular. General Spencer’s disgust was so great at General Putnam’s promotion, that he left without visiting me, or making known his intention in any respect. General Pomeroy had also retired before my arrival, occasioned, as it is said, by some disappointment from the Provincial Congress. General Thomas is much esteemed, and most earnestly desires

to continue in the service ; and as far as my opportunities have enabled me to judge, I must join the general opinion, that he is an able, good officer, and his resignation would be a public loss. The postponement of him to Pomeroy and Heath, whom he has commanded, would make his continuance very difficult, and probably operate on his mind as the like circumstances did on that of Spencer."

Washington, in a letter to General Schuyler, of July 28th, says, "The arrangement of general officers in Massachusetts and Connecticut, has been very unpopular, indeed I may say injudicious. It is returned to Congress for further consideration, and has much retarded my plan of discipline."

Generals Wooster and Spencer were both senior to Putnam in the Connecticut state appointment, and by what fatality he was placed over them by the Continental Congress, is hardly necessary to inquire at this time and in this place. Wooster and Spencer, probably, were never reconciled to their degradation, as they both eventually resigned and left the service.

The difficulty in Massachusetts, in the appointment of general officers, was entirely healed. General Pomeroy did not return to the army, and never received his commission, and the Congress passed a special resolve, that General Thomas should have precedence of all the Brigadiers in the army, in which decision, the army and the public fully acquiesced.

But previous to the decision of Congress, Thomas had withdrawn from his command at Roxbury, concluding

that he could not in honor serve in an army, and be commanded by those whom he had so recently commanded. His intentions being made known, efforts from various quarters, to retain him in the army, were made, which have no parallel in the military annals of this country or Europe.

*"House of Representatives, Watertown, July 22d, 1775.*

SIR,

This House approving of your services in the station you were appointed to in the army by the Congress of this Colony, embrace this opportunity to express their sense of them, and at the same time to desire your continuance with the army, if you shall judge you can do it without impropriety, till the final determination of the Continental Congress shall be known with regard to the appointment of the general officers. We assure you that the justice of this House will be engaged to make you an adequate compensation for your services. We have such intelligence as affords us confidence to suppose, that a few days will determine whether any such provision shall be made for you as is consistent with your honor to accept, and shall give encouragement for you to remain in the service.

By order of the House,

JAMES WARREN, *Speaker,*"

GENERAL THOMAS."

The next effort to prevent General Thomas from resigning, was made by General Lee, who at that time, as

a military gentleman, was considered by many as superior to Washington, and it was the first time in his life he ever condescended to address any one in the language of entreaty.

*“ July 23d, 1775.*

SIR,

It is with the greatest concern that I have heard of your intention to quit the service of your country at a crisis when men of merit can be so ill spared. You think yourself not justly dealt with in the appointments of the Continental Congress. I am quite of the same opinion, but is this a time sir, when the liberties of your country, the fate of posterity, the rights of mankind are at stake, to indulge our resentments for any ill treatment we may have received as individuals? I have myself, sir, full as great, perhaps greater reason to complain than yourself. I have passed through the highest ranks, in some of the most respectable services in Europe. According then to modern etiquette notions of a soldier's honor and delicacy, I ought to consider at least the preferment given to General Ward over me as the highest indignity, but I thought it my duty as a citizen and asserter of liberty, to waive every consideration. On this principle, although a Major General of five years standing, and not a native of America, I consented to serve under General Ward, because I was taught to think that the concession would be grateful to his countrymen, and flatter myself that the concession has done me credit in the eye of the world; and can you, sir, born



in this very country, which a banditti of ministerial assassins are now attempting utterly to destroy with sword, fire and famine, abandon the defence of her, because you have been personally ill used?

For God Almighty's sake, for the sake of every thing that is dear, and ought to be dear to you, for the sake of your country, of mankind, and, let me add of your own reputation, discard such sentiments. Consider well the dreadful consequence such a pernicious example may occasion; consider well whether such a proceeding may not bring down upon your head the contempt and abhorrence of that community which has hitherto most justly held you in the highest estimation.

I beg you will excuse the liberty I take in thus addressing you; and ascribe it to the true motive—a zeal for the public good, and the great regard I have for your personal self, and that you will believe me to be most sincerely yours,

CHARLES LEE."

GENERAL THOMAS."

The next effort made to retain General Thomas in the army, was by our own Washington, and he never made a greater.

*Cambridge July 23d, 1775.*

SIR,

The retirement of a general officer, possessing the confidence of his country and the army, at so critical a period, appears to me to be big with fatal consequences, both to the public cause and his own reputation. While



it is unexecuted, I think it my duty to make this last effort to prevent it; and after suggesting those reasons which occur to me against your resignation, your own virtue and good sense must decide upon it. In the usual contests of empire and ambition, the conscience of the soldier has so little share, that he may very properly insist upon his claims of rank, and extend his pretensions even to punctilio: but in such a cause as this, where the object is neither glory, nor extent of territory, but a defence of all that is dear and valuable in life, surely every post ought to be deemed honorable in which a man can serve his country. What matter of triumph will it afford our enemies, that in less than one month, a spirit of discord should show itself in the highest ranks of the army, not to be extinguished by any thing less than a total desertion of duty? How little reason shall we have to boast of American union, of patriotism, if at such a time, and in such a cause, smaller and partial considerations cannot give way to the great and general interest? These remarks not only affect you as a member of the great American body, but as an inhabitant of Massachusetts Bay, your own province, and the other colonies have a peculiar and unquestionable claim to your services; and in my opinion you cannot refuse them, without relinquishing in some degree that character for public virtue and honor which you have hitherto supported.

If our cause is just, it should be supported; but where shall it find support, if gentlemen of merit and experience, unable to conquer the prejudices of a competition,

withdraw themselves in an hour of danger ; I admit, sir, that your claims and services have not had due respect—it is by no means a singular case ; worthy men of all nations and countries have had reason to make the same complaint ; but they did not for this abandon the public cause—they nobly stifled the dictates of resentment, and made their enemies ashamed of their injustice. And can America show no such instances of magnanimity ? For the sake of your bleeding country, your devoted province, your charter rights, and by the memory of those brave men who have already fell in this great cause, I conjure you to banish from your mind every suggestion of anger and disappointment ; your country will do ample justice to your merits ; they already do it, by the sorrow and regret expressed on the occasion, and the sacrifice you are called upon to make, will, in the judgment of every good man, and lover of his country, do you more real honor than the most distinguished victory.

You possess the confidence and affection of the troops of this province particularly ; many of them are not capable of judging the propriety and reasons of your conduct ; should they esteem themselves authorized by your example to leave the service, the consequences may be fatal and irretrievable. There is reason to fear it, from the personal attachments of the men to their officers, and the obligations that are supposed to arise from those attachments. But, sir, the other colonies have also their claims upon you, not only as a native of America, but an inhabitant of this province. They have

made common cause with it, they have sacrificed their trade, loaded themselves with taxes, and are ready to spill their blood in vindication of Massachusetts Bay, while all the security and profit of a neutrality has been offered them. But no arts or temptations could seduce them from your side, and leave you a prey to a cruel and perfidious ministry. Sure these reflections must have some weight, with a mind as generous and considerate as yours. How will you be able to answer it to your country and your own conscience, if the step you are about to take should lead to a dissolution of the army, or the loss and ruin of America be ascribed to measures which your councils and conduct could have prevented? Before it is too late, I entreat, sir, you would weigh well the greatness of the stake, and upon how much smaller circumstances the fate of empires has depended.

Of your own honor and reputation you are the best and only judge; but allow me to say, that a people contending for life and liberty, are seldom disposed to look with a favorable eye upon either men or measures whose passions, interests, or consequences will clash with those inestimable objects. As to myself, sir, be assured, that I shall with pleasure, do all in my power to make your situation both easy and honorable, and that the sentiments here expressed flow from a clear opinion that your duty to your country, your posterity, and yourself, most explicitly require your continuance in the service.

‘The order and rank of the commissions is under the consideration of the Continental Congress, whose deter-

mination will be received in a few days. It may argue a want of respect to that august body not to wait the decision; but at all events, I shall flatter myself that these reasons with others which your own good judgment will suggest, will strengthen your mind against those impressions which are incident to humanity, and laudable to a certain degree; and that the result will be, your resolution to assist your country in this day of her distress. That you may reap the full reward of honor and public esteem which such a conduct deserves is the sincere wish of

Sir,

Your very

Obed. and most humble Servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON."

GENERAL JOHN THOMAS."

"THE ADDRESS OF THE FIELD OFFICERS OF THE SEVERAL  
REGIMENTS BELONGING TO THE CAMP IN ROXBURY.

To the Honorable John Thomas, Esq.

SIR,

Your appointment as Lieut. General by the Provincial Congress, in consequence of which you took the supreme command in this camp, gave singular satisfaction to all acquainted with your character, both on account of your inflexible attachment to the liberties of your country, and your knowledge and experience in military movements; and to your vigilance, prudence, and skilful management is to be ascribed in a great measure, that order and regularity for which this camp

has been celebrated, and which are essentially requisite to the very being of an army. To these important services you have the purest incense to a great and good mind, the unfeigned thanks of the officers and soldiers under your immediate command, as well as of every friend to his country, and the rights of mankind. We are penetrated with the deepest concern, that by an unfortunate concurrence of events, an arrangement is made, which leads you to think, that you cannot continue in the army, consistent with those delicate and refined sentiments of honor which are peculiarly and fitly characteristic of the soldier. We would not solicit you to do any thing derogatory to your reputation, or the rank you have formerly sustained ; but as no man has so much endeared himself to the regiments which compose your brigade, as yourself, we earnestly request, that you would assume the command of it :—that vast dignity and consequence of the cause we are contending for, may be more than a counterpoise to other considerations, of what nature soever, that your country may still be advantaged by your abilities ; and though mistakes are entailed to humanity, we doubt not the gratitude and justice of your countrymen, will reward you in some degree adequate to your merit. After all we submit the matter to your Honor's decision, assuring you that although we shall part with you with regret, yet we will demean ourselves as becomes the soldier.

In behalf of the within mentioned officers.

THEO. COTTON, *President.*"

*Roxbury, July 25th, 1775."*



The above resolves, letters and addresses, had the desired effect, as might well be supposed, to retain Gen. Thomas in the army and prevent his resignation till the determination of the Continental Congress was known. The result was as we have seen a restoration to rank and command. In the battle of Bunker's or Breed's Hill, on the 17th of June, Thomas took no direct part, although his post at Roxbury, on the south of Boston, was cannonaded during the whole day of the battle; and the original plan of the British was to approach his command, and take possession of Dorchester Heights.

For on the augmentation of his forces in May, 1775, General Gage determined to occupy the heights of Dorchester to the south, and those of Charlestown to the north of the town; the occupation of these was not only necessary to the extension of his quarters, but indispensable to his holding them. It was therefore determined in the first instance to seize on Dorchester Heights, as they were the most commanding, and of easiest access to the Provincials. Agreeably to the plan concerted, Howe was to have landed at the point of the peninsula nearest the castle; Clinton on the flat, between that place and Nook's Hill, whilst Burgoyne was to take post on the neck, and keep up a heavy cannonade on the camp at Roxbury, commanded by Thomas. From the strength, disposition and equipments of those corps, no effectual opposition could have been made to this operation of the royal army, and a few days more would have put it in possession of Bunker's Hill.

The arrangements of General Gage, preparatory to



these meditated operations, necessarily attracted the attention of the inhabitants of Boston, and being communicated to the Provincial Congress, they became jealous of some hostile movement, without being able to penetrate the object of it. They recommended to the council of war the fortification of Dorchester Heights and Bunker's Hill. The resolution of the council of war being taken, Colonel William Prescott, the hero of Bunker's Hill, was ordered to take possession of that height, which brought on the battle of the 17th of June, and prevented their taking possession of Dorchester Heights, which left that point open, and which Thomas afterward occupied with the happiest effect.

June 17th., 1775, will always remain the proudest day in the annals of the arduous contest for Independence, and Prescott and his companions in arms will always stand first. Warren, who fell nobly supporting the action, but as a volunteer and without command, was the favorite of the day, and for years engrossed the fame due to Prescott. But being really a great man, if alive, would disdain to wear laurels not his own. Warren's descendants well know their ancestor was not dependant on borrowed honors. "Prescott was the hero of that blood dyed summit—the midnight leader and guard, the morning sentinel, the orator of the opening strife, the cool and deliberate overseer of the whole struggle, the well-skilled marksman of the exact distance at which a shot was certain death; he was the venerable chief in whose bright eye and steady nerve all read their duty; and when conduct, skill and courage could do no more,

he was the merciful deliverer of the remnant. Prescott was the hero of the day, and whenever the tale is told, let him be its chieftain.”\*

From Bunker Hill battle to March, 1776, General Thomas commanded the most exposed camp of the besieging army, at Roxbury, and by constant vigilance preserved it from injury or insult. It having been determined to take possession of Dorchester Heights, which would bring on action or produce the evacuation of Boston by the British army; on Monday the 4th of March, in the evening, these heights were taken possession of by General Thomas with about twenty-five hundred men, and between three and four hundred carts with entrenching tools, and a train of carts with facines and screwed hay.

The whole moved in solemn silence, and with perfect order and regularity, while a continued roar of artillery from our lines served to engage the attention and divert the enemy from the main object. The amount of labor performed during the night, by this party, considering the earth was frozen eighteen inches deep, was almost incredible.

On the morning of the 5th, the British saw at once, there was no time to deliberate, Thomas must be removed or Boston evacuated. The former was immediately determined on, and a tremendous cannonade was commenced on our works from the forts in Boston, and the shipping in the harbor. During the forenoon an attack

\*Rev. Mr. Ellis.

was hourly expected ; and nothing less than the carnage of Breed's Hill anticipated.

During this time Thomas was reinforced with 2,000 troops, and the Commander-in-chief arrived and animated and encouraged the soldiers, by reminding them that it was the fifth of March, the day of the Boston massacre which he recalled to their remembrance as a day never to be forgotten ; and in his own words, " An engagement was fully expected, and I never saw spirits higher, or more ardor prevailing." Our breast works were strengthened, and among the means of defence were a great number of barrels filled with stones and sand, arranged in front of our works, which were to be put in motion and made to roll down the hill, to break the ranks and legs of the assailants as they advanced.

The anxious day passed without an attack, and a most violent storm the next day obliged General Howe to abandon the enterprize. On the 7th., there were indications that the British in Boston were preparing to evacuate the town, and on the 8th., they sent a flag of truce with the following paper, signed by the selectmen of the town.

" As his Excellency, General Howe, is determined to leave the town with the troops under his command, a number of respectable inhabitants being very anxious for its preservation and safety, have applied to General Robinson, who at their request has communicated the same to General Howe, who has assured him that he has no intention of distressing the town, unless the troops under

his command are molested during their embarkation, or at their departure by any armed force without, which declaration he gave General Robinson leave to communicate to the inhabitants.

If such an opposition should take place, we have the greatest reason to expect that the town will be exposed to entire destruction. As our fears are quieted with regard to General Howe's intentions, we beg that we may have assurances that so dreadful a calamity may not be brought on by any measure without. As a testimony of the truth of the above, we have signed our names to this paper ; carried out by Messrs Thomas and Jonathan Amory, and Peter Johonnet, who have the earnest entreaty of the inhabitants, through the Lieutenant Governor, who solicited a flag of truce for this purpose.

JOHN SCALLY,  
TIMOTHY MARSHALL,  
TIMOTHY NEWALL,  
SAMUEL AUSTIN.

*Boston, March 8th., 1776.*

Washington gave no answer to this informal communication of Howe's, or any assurance that the wishes of the inhabitants of Boston would be gratified, but acted in conformity to both, by letting Howe depart unmolested. General Thomas' own account of the transaction, in a letter to his wife, will be more acceptable to the reader, than anything that can be said by another.

DEAR MRS. THOMAS,

We have for some time been preparing to take possession of Dorchester Point, and last Monday night about seven o'clock, I marched with about three thousand picked men, beside three hundred and sixty ox teams and some pieces of artillery. Two companies of the train of teams were laden with materials for our works. About eight o'clock we ascended the high hills, and by day light got two hills defensible.

About sun rise, the enemy and others in Boston, appeared on the tops of the houses and on the wharfs viewing us with astonishment, for our appearance was unexpected to them. The cannonading which had been kept up all night from our lines at Lamb's Dam, and from the enemy's lines likewise, at Lechmere's Point, now ceased from these quarters, and the enemy turned their fire towards us on the hills, but they soon found it was to little effect.

About ten o'clock we discovered large bodies of troops embarking in boats with their artillery, which made a formidable appearance. After some time they were put on board transports, and several of the ships came down near to the castle, as we supposed, with a design to land on our shore.

Our people appeared in spirits to receive them. We were in a good posture of defence, and had two thousand men added to our number. The enemy viewed us critically, and remained in that situation that night. The next day they came to sail, and returned to town and landed their troops. On Friday, about two o'clock, P. M.



they sent a flag of truce with a paper, a copy of which I enclose.

I have had very little sleep or rest this week, being closely employed night and day. But now I think we are well secured. I write in haste, thinking you may be anxious to hear, as there is much firing this way. We lost but two men killed in all this affair. How things are in Boston, or what loss they have sustained from our shots and shells, at present we are not informed, but I am sensible we distressed them much, from appearances. I have wrote you enclosed by the same hand, and am in haste.

JOHN THOMAS.

*Dorchester Hills, in a small hut, March 9, 1776.*

Your son John is well and in high spirits. He ran away from Oakley privately, on Tuesday morning, and got by the sentries and came to me on Dorchester Hills, where he has been most of the time since."

Mrs. Thomas' disobedient son John, had been left by his father, on Monday evening, when he marched for Dorchester Heights, in the care of his colored servant Oakley, who, no doubt, was instructed to keep him from mischief and danger, he being but ten years old. On Tuesday morning he found every thing in motion, and battle expected, where his father was to act a conspicuous part, considered it dishonorable to remain in retirement, hazarded his father's displeasure and sought the post of danger. Years had passed, young as he was, since he had heard his parents and neighbors express their indignation at every kind of oppression, whether civil or religious.



He might not have thought favorably of religious worship dictated by act of parliament, or of taxation without representation; he might have been so heretical as to have believed "that there might be a government without a king, and a church without a bishop."

Whatever John's train of thinking was at the time which induced action, he made his appearance on Dorchester Heights, and it is hardly worth the conjecture in what manner he was received by a gallant and affectionate parent. John can now say more perhaps than any other man, that in the hour of danger, and in expectation of close and stubborn action, "I stood fearless, by the side of George Washington and John Thomas." Of all Washington's military plans, none were better formed, or more skilfully executed than that of occupying Dorchester Heights, which drove the British from Boston. The selection of the officer and troops to carry it into effect were the best possible; and nothing however minute, was omitted to secure complete success. Washington had been eight months in command, and no successful or brilliant operation had taken place under his immediate superintendence. People began to complain audibly, that he was not so desirous to take Boston as to prolong his command. They then did not know that he had frequently laid plans before his military council, to drive the British from that town, which were rejected on account of the too great hazard supposed to attend them. This was the first of his plans which was adopted. The first part of it, was to compel retreat before the works at Dorchester; the second, to enter the town of Boston by

another body of troops, while the first part was in execution. In a letter to Colonel Joseph Reed, afterwards President of the State of Pennsylvania, he says, "The four thousand men destined to take possession of Boston on the 5th, if the ministerialists had attempted our works at Dorchester Heights, or the lines at Roxbury, was to have been headed by General Putnam. But he would have had an easy time of it, as his motions were to have been regulated by signals, and those signals by appearances. He was not to have made the attempt, unless the town had been drained, or very considerably weakened of its forces."

Congress were now looking for an officer to command the troops led into Canada by Montgomery and Arnold, and having been cautioned by Washington not to appoint General Putnam, for that service, they on the 6th of March, promoted General Thomas to the rank of Major General, and sent him to command in Canada. A letter from John Adams, then a member of Congress at Philadelphia, of March 7th., to General Thomas, gives so correct a view of American affairs at that time, in that quarter, that it is here inserted.

"DEAR SIR,

The Congress have determined to send you to Canada. They have advanced you one step by making you a Major General, and have made a handsome establishment for a table. Your friends, the delegates from your native province, were much embarrassed, between a desire to have you promoted and placed in so honor-

able a command on the one hand, and a reluctance at losing your services at Roxbury and Cambridge on the other. But all agreed that you ought to be placed where you could do the most service, and Canada was thought by all to be very important, and by some the most important post in America. You will have excellent advice and assistance in the committee we are sending, Franklin, Chase and Carrol.

Walker, Price and Bendfield, will be in Canada too, as soon as you. Generals Wooster and Arnold will give you the best information. The department to which you are destined has been in great confusion, and every gentleman who has come from there has a different account. General Schuyler, who is an honest man and a good patriot, has had a politeness about him towards Canadian and British prisoners, which has enabled them and their ministerial friends to impose upon him in some instances. This has occasioned some altercation between him and General Wooster. Schuyler's headquarters will be at Albany, I suppose, and he will be of vast service, in procuring and forwarding supplies, and in many other ways in promoting the service. But his health will not permit him to go into Canada. I wish I could write you a volume, for to give you the characters of persons in Canada of whom we have heard, and some of whom we have seen, which would fill one. But these hints must suffice.

Your humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

Let me beg of you to write me if you can spare

time: It is of great importance that the delegates from New England should be truly informed of the course of things in Canada."

General Thomas, while in his proud command at Dorchester, was promoted, and appointed to a more extensive and important command, which proved disastrous to his country, and fatal to himself. After seeing the British army and fleet leave his native province, he took his departure for Canada, the difficulty of travel at that season of the year, and other obstructions to his progress on the route, may be conceived, but a letter from the good patriot, General Schuyler, will more fully reveal.

*Saratoga, Friday Evening, 8 o'clock, March 29th, 1776.*

SIR,

By a letter this moment received from my Secretary, I have the pleasure to learn you have arrived at Albany. Lest you should be induced by the hopes of still being able to cross the lakes on the ice to leave Albany, I send this by express to advise you of the impossibility. Four companies are now lying about forty miles north of Ticonderoga, without being able to proceed, as a great part of the lake is open. I hope a few more warm days and high southerly winds will remove the obstacles. The first of the cannon will arrive at Fort George to morrow, and I hope the whole will be there by the middle of next week. Had a sufficient number of carriages been provided by the persons to whose

charge they were committed at New York, they would have been at Fort George on Monday. I propose doing myself the pleasure to see you on Sunday, or Monday at farthest, by which time I hope all will be in such a train as will leave me to return without anxiety.

I am Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

PH. SCHUYLER."

GENERAL THOMAS."

We see what Mr. Adams had so recently foretold, that Thomas might rely on the vast service Schuyler would render in procuring and forwarding supplies, and in promoting the service in many other ways. The promptness with which the above letter was written and forwarded by express, in the night, the important information given, and his determination to wait on his junior, for the purpose of giving further information, and congratulating him on his new and high command, as well as on the part he had recently taken in driving the enemy from the capital of New England, must have been highly gratifying to General Thomas, and cheered and consoled him in the anticipated roughness of his new and trying situation. They were congenial spirits and the only contest or rivalry between them was, which should serve their country the most effectually and successfully. The accurate and faithful historian Judge Marshall, will be followed, in substance, in what relates to every thing of the army in Canada and General Thomas, until his death. "The season of the year now



approached when reinforcements from England would be certain, and notwithstanding the feeble state in which the army still continued, the Americans under Arnold deemed it indispensably necessary to recommence active operations, and to renew the siege of Quebec. They now again erected their batteries, and on the first of April, just as they were about to open them, General Wooster arrived from Montreal, and took the command. The next day the batteries were opened, without much effect. They had not weight of metal to make a breach in the wall, nor an engineer capable of directing a seige, nor artillerists who understood the management of the pieces. The few troops of this description originally belonging to the army were prisoners in Quebec. The day after the arrival of Wooster, Arnold's horse fell with him, and so bruised his leg which had been wounded, as to confine him for some time to his bed. Believeing himself neglected, he obtained leave of absence as soon as he was able to move, and took command at Montreal. The true cause of Arnold's disgust, probably was his being superseded by Wooster, who he personally disliked. Some fire ships had been prepared both at Orleans, and Point aux Trembles, to be used against the vessels in the harbor as soon as the ice would permit the operation. The difficulties usually attending such an enterprise were greatly augmented by the want of sailors, and of a skilful commander to conduct them. The attempt, however was made with great boldness, and the ship from Orleans very nearly succeeded. Coming from

below she was at first mistaken for a friend, and proceeded in the night, very near to the cul de sac where the vessels lay, before her character was discovered. The fire from the enemy instantly opened, on receiving which, the train immediately ignited; but the sails caught the flames so quickly, as to loose the benefit of the wind, and stop the progress of the vessel, just at which time the ebb tide commencing carried her down the river. The American army which had been drawn up, prepared if this plan had succeeded to take advantage of the confusion it would occasion, had the mortification to witness its failure after the most sanguine and encouraging appearances.

A considerable part of the army being entitled to a discharge in April, no inducements could prevail on them to continue longer in so severe a service. This deduction of General Wooster's force was the more felt, because of the present state of the roads; the lakes and the St. Lawrence, impeded for a time, the arrival of reinforcements destined for his aid. The roads were so deep as to be nearly impassible, the ice had become too soft for the use of sleds, and had not broke up so as to admit the passage of boats. Among the first who reached the camp, in this state of things, was General Thomas, who, after his appointment to the command in Canada, had made great exertions to join the army. He arrived on the first day of May, and found his whole force to consist of nineteen hundred men, and less than one thousand fit for duty, including officers. Among the effectives were three hundred entitled to a discharge,

who refused to do duty. The sick were generally ill of the small pox, in the hospital. And this force was necessarily divided so as to occupy different posts which had been deemed necessary to maintain, at great distances from each other, and on different sides of the St. Lawrence, so that not more three hundred men could be brought together at one point, which might be attacked by the whole force of the enemy ; and in all the magazines there were but one hundred and fifty barrels of powder and six days provisions ; nor could adequate supplies from the country people be relied on, as the Canadians no longer manifested a disposition to serve them. The river was beginning to open below, and no doubt could be entertained, that the first moment of its being practicable, would be seized by the enemy for the relief of this very important place.

Amidst these unpromising circumstances, the hope of taking Qnebec, appeared to General Thomas chimerical, and the longer continuance before the town useless and dangerous. The first reinforcements which should arrive from England, would deprive him entirely of the use of the river, and embarrass the removal of his sick and military stores. No existing object remained to justify the hazard. Under these impressions, General Thomas called a council of war on the 5th. of May, in which it was determined, that they were not in a condition to risk an assault, and that the sick should be removed to the Three Rivers, and the artillery and other stores embarked in boats, in order to move with the army higher up the river to a more defensible position.

On the evening of the same day, certain intelligence was received that a British fleet was below, and the next morning five ships, which had with much labor and danger made their way up the river through the ice, before it was deemed practicable, appeared in sight. They soon entered the harbor, and landed some men, whilst the Americans were assiduously employed in the embarkation of their sick and stores, an operation carried on the more slowly, because the first appearance of the ships in the river deprived them of the aid expected from the teams and carriages of the Canadians. About one o'clock Carleton made a sortie at the head of one thousand men, formed into two divisions, and supported by six field pieces. No entrenchments had been thrown up for the support of the camp, and not more than three hundred men with one field piece could be brought into action. Thus circumstanced victory was scarcely possible, and could have produced no important effect, as the enemy would immediately retire under the cannon of the town; while defeat would certainly annihilate this little army. General Thomas therefore with the advice of the field officers about him, determined not to risk an action, and ordered his troops to retreat up the river.

This was done with much precipitation, and many of the sick with all the military stores, fell into the hands of the enemy. Unfortunately, to their quantity were added two tons of powder just sent down by General Schuyler, and five hundred stand of small arms.

Much to the honor of General Carleton, he pursued the wise and humane policy of treating with great kindness, the sick and other prisoners, that fell into his hands. The falls of Richelieu had been contemplated as a place of great natural strength, which by being fortified and defended by a few armed vessels, might, in the event of failing in the attempt on Quebec, stop the progress of the enemy up the river, and thus preserve the greater part of Canada. General Montgomery had strongly recommended an early attention to this position, and it had been determined to fortify it ; but the measures resolved on, had not been executed. Some armed gondolas were building up the river, but had not been completed in time ; and in the present state of that place, it was entirely impracticable to maintain it. The ships of the enemy were pressing up the river, and were then at Jacques Cartier, about three leagues below De Chambeau, and, as they had no means of stopping them at the falls of Richelieu, would soon be above so as to subject the troops in their present position, to the same disadvantages to which they had been exposed before Quebec.

The army therefore continued its retreat to De Chambeau, where on the seventh, another council of war was called, in which it was agreed they should retire to the mouth of the Sorel. In pursuance of this advice, the remaining sick were moved up the river ; but General Thomas was determined to continue in his present position some time longer, by the information that large reinforcements were now passing the lakes, and might daily be expected ; but those reinforcements not arriving



as his intelligence induced him to hope, and the enemy advancing in force, he was obliged to retreat to the Sorel, where he was seized with the small pox, of which he died. The Americans in general were by no means satisfied with the conduct of this gentleman. To him, in some measure, they attributed the disasters which ruined their affairs in Canada: but this censure was unjust; he took command of the army when it was too weak to maintain its ground; when the time for saving the sick and military stores had passed away. The seige of Quebec instead of being persevered in longer, ought certainly to have been abandoned at an earlier period.

It was the real fault of those who commanded at this station. It is to be ascribed to the reluctance always felt by inexperienced officers to disappoint the public expectation, by relinquishing an enterprise concerning which sanguine hopes have been entertained, even after every reasonable prospect of success had vanished: and to encounter the obloquy of giving up a post, although it can no longer with prudence be defended. In pursuance with which the seige of Quebec was maintained. These motives operated with all their force, and they received an addition, from the unwillingness felt by the Americans to abandon those of their friends who had taken so decided a part in their favor, as to be incapable of remaining in safety behind them. In April, when the troops left General Wooster, on the expiration of their enlistment, it seems surprising that he did not immediately secure his sick and stores by a retreat up the river,

taken a strong position, and await the arrival of General Thomas. An unwillingness to disappoint public expectation, and the fear of meeting their temporary displeasure, seems to have been the only, but insufficient reason.

On the death of General Thomas the command of the army devolved on General Thompson; but soon after General Sullivan arrived in the American camp, with reinforcements which increased the army to four or five thousand, and assumed the command. From this time retreat, defeat and misfortune followed the army in quick succession. After destroying some armed vessels on the Sorel and St. Lawrence, and burning the fortifications at Chamblée and St. Johns, he left Canada, although at the head of eight thousand men, and by order of General Schuyler took post at Crown Point, where he was superseded by General Gates.—Thus terminated the enterprise against Canada; it was bold and at one period promised success. Had a few incidents turned out fortunately; had Arnold been able to reach Quebec a few days sooner; or to have crossed the St. Lawrence on his first arrival, or had the gallant Montgomery not fallen on the 31st day of December, it is probable the expedition would have been crowned with success. But as it would have required ten thousand troops to have retained possession of it, the expedition must now be viewed, as partaking more of the romantic than the useful. As it resulted it was unfortunate in every aspect in which it can be viewed. The loss of men by sickness and battle was great, as well as the

munitions of war; to which may be added the loss of the two best Generals, Montgomery and Thomas, Congress sent into the field. All which were of the first necessity in defending the homes of the thirteen colonies, rather than acquiring foreign provinces by conquest.

On the eighth day of May General Thomas wrote Washington, communicating the intelligence of his having raised the siege of Quebec, and commenced his retreat. On the 24th of the same month Washington replied, "I received your favor of the 8th instant with its enclosures, confirming the melancholy intelligence I had before heard, of your having been obliged to raise the siege of Quebec, and to make a precipitate retreat with the loss of the cannon in the batteaux, and interception of the powder going from General Schuyler. This unfortunate affair has given a sad shock to our schemes in that quarter, and blasted the hope we entertained of reducing that fortress and the whole of Canada to our possession. From your representation, things must have been found in great confusion and disorder, and such as to have made a retreat almost inevitable; but nevertheless, it is hoped you will be able to make a good stand yet, and by that means secure a good part or all the upper part of the country.

That being a matter of the utmost importance in the present contest, it is my wish and that of Congress, that you take an advantageous post as far down the river as possible, so as not to preclude you from a retreat, if it should be necessary, nor from getting proper supplies of provision. The lower down you can maintain a stand,

the more advantageous will it be, as all the country will most probably take part with us, from which we may draw some assistance and support, considering all below as entirely within the power of the enemy, and of course in their favor. This misfortune must be repaired, if possible, by our more vigorous exertions; and I trust that nothing will be wanting on your part or in your power to advance our country's cause."

This was the last communication ever directed to General Thomas by his beloved commander or Congress, and it is doubtful if this was ever received by him. It admits the retreat from before Quebec to have been inevitable, but at the same time must have renewed in Thomas' mind what he before well knew, the great mortification such a step would occasion in the minds of Congress and his countrymen. This information, from such a source, must have been keenly felt by a mind like his, and at the same time, utterly beyond his power to apply an effectual remedy.

With all the wisdom of Congress during our whole contest for independence, their seemed to be a delusion in their determination to take and keep possession of Canada. And Thomas must have felt that retreat, however inevitable, would be viewed by them as disgraceful. On the 2d of June, 1776, at Chamblee, on the river Sorel, while anxiously awaiting the expected reinforcements, he died of the small pox, aged fifty-two years. The disease was so malignant that he was entirely blind some days before his death. And what is remarkable, he had in the course of his professional life, been

familiar with the disorder, and uncommonly skilful in its treatment, and yet had never taken it either by inoculation or otherwise. He attained an enviable eminence in his profession in the section of the country of his residence. In his person he was six feet high, erect and well proportioned, so that his appearance was dignified and commanding. In his manners, affable, gentlemanly and of unaffected sincerity. He never lessened his character or martial fame by arrogance or ostentation.

Granting to all the applause due to their merit, he enjoyed that due to himself with universal assent. As a disciplinarian he was correct, as the whole army bore witness. Among a body of undisciplined countrymen, assembled at the siege of Boston, he was the first to introduce order and regularity without severity, by the weight of his character. It does not appear, after he was advanced to high command, either in the old French or revolutionary wars, that any opportunity was afforded him of being engaged in close action with the enemies of his country, but by the testimony of officers with him in both wars, he was cool and self-possessed in every emergency, and when action was fully expected, as at Dorchester Heights, his coolness and self-possession inspired his troops with confidence, ardor and zeal for action, which Washington said he never saw surpassed. His perfect collection and soundness of mind to the end of his last sickness, was noticed by all his attendants, as has often been remarked by the late Hon. Joshua Thomas, of Plymouth, then one of his aids, and long after distinguished as an able and upright judge.



His letter to his wife, from Dorchester Heights, is a picture of the man. Not a word even to her, of the estimate in which he was held by his commander, whose first trait of character was an intuitive knowledge of his fellow men, and especially of those under him. Not an intimation that he was selected for that important and delicate service in preference to two Major Generals then in camp, to one of whom was assigned a secondary part to act. All this might have been mentioned to her without arrogance or boasting. Not a word of his courage, for no one ever doubted he possessed it, he simply tells her that John is safe, and only two men killed "in all this affair." But further particulars of his character and services are unnecessary, when it is recollected that he received particular marks of favor, and especial confidence was reposed in him by two of the first Generals of the age, Sir Jeffrey Amherst and George Washington.

He married Hannah Thomas, of Plymouth, a woman distinguished for intelligence and general accomplishments. At the time of his marriage he was rather advanced in life. He left a wife, daughter and two sons, both the latter still survive ; one of them was with him at Dorchester Heights. His wife lived to an advanced age, and died in 1819, universally respected. This imperfect sketch is not only due to the memory of General Thomas on his own account, and the character of his respectable ancestors and descendants, for his nobility neither began or ended with himself, but to the whole union, and especially to the old colony of Plymouth, his native place. No section of New England was more distinguished for

intelligence, patriotism and unanimity in the cause of self-government in church and state, and for its able defenders in the cabinet and field, as the Cushings, Otis', Paynes and Warrens, in the councils of the nation, and the Thomases, and Lincolns, in the field, bear witness. Notwithstanding the loss of Thomas, the old colony preserved its standing, for his mantle fell and rested on the brave and virtuous Lincoln. They were personally and intimately acquainted, as appears from business transactions between them a few days before the former left Cambridge for Canada, his last field. They were similar in manners and character, and attained an equal standing in the estimation of their countrymen. Lincoln's military career was longer and more varied. The first we hear of him as a military character in the revolution, was in the capacity of Major General of Militia of Massachusetts. On the 13th of June, 1776, he embarked at the head of some Provincial troops and volunteers at Long Wharf, Boston, to clear the harbor of a fifty gun ship, and several smaller armed vessels. He landed on Long Island, made arrangements for a vigorous cannonade ; but a few shots soon convinced the British Commodore of his danger, and he hastily abandoned the Boston waters, never more to infest them. The acquaintance which Washington had formed with Lincoln, while at Cambridge, induced him to recommend the latter to Congress, as a Major General, to which office he was appointed in February, 1777. In July of the same year, Washington sent him from the main army to join the northern army under Schuyler, because of the influence

he had in New England, and the confidence the militia placed in him, and *the absolute necessity there was of sending a determined officer*. He arrived at Bennington the day after Stark's victory. He immediately commenced operations in Burgoyne's rear, by sending Colonel Brown with 500 men to Lake George. He captured the fort and two hundred batteaux, with two hundred and ninety-three of the enemy and liberated one hundred American prisoners. This raised the spirits of the northern militia.

After some other operations he joined the army of Gates, to whom he was second in command. In a letter of the late General Ebenezer Mattoon, then a Lieutenant, of November 13, 1837, to the late Colonel John Trumbull, he says, "As to your enquiry about General Lincoln, in the action of the 7th of October on Bemus' Heights, I recollect our troops broke through the centre of the enemy's line, which left Lord Belcarras on our extreme right, in a very exposed situation. Early in the morning of the 8th, General Lincoln said to me, "my aids are all very busily engaged in writing, will you mount one of their horses and ride to the lines with me?" I replied, "Sir, I will with pleasure." On the way he observed, "If the enemy have not changed their position during the night, I think Lord Belcarras can be cut off." We rode to the southerly part of our line, which extended northwardly a considerable distance, parallel with the enemy's, which lay east of us, and within long musket shot of where our army lay, secreted behind some logs laid up. The General leaped his horse over the logs, and I followed him.

The enemy immediately opened a fire upon him, and as he rode northward the firing increased both from small arms and cannon. I rode at his left side, and regarded my situation as very hazardous. The fire increased as we advanced, and I remarked to the General, "Sir, your life is too dear to the army to be thus exposed." He made no reply, but looked at me and smiled, which I construed to mean, "You are more concerned about yourself than about me." We proceeded but a few yards further, when I saw him shudder, and he said, the rascals have struck me." I enquired where, he replied, "In my hip I believe." I immediately turned my horse to his right, and found his boot perforated with a musket ball, and the blood flowing out profusely. I said it is your ancle Sir." "Indeed," said he, "I thought it was my hip." This put an end to the reconnoissance, to my great satisfaction."

This disabled him, and he was removed to Albany, and thence to Hingham. He joined the army again in August, 1778, but suffered for several years from the effects of the wound. The reputation of Lincoln now stood so high that the delegates in Congress from South Carolina requested that body to appoint him to the command of the Southern army, which was accordingly done, and he reached Charleston in December. Soon after his arrival at Charleston, General Robert Howe was defeated in Georgia, and the British took possession of Savannah. In March following General Ashe was defeated at Briar Creek, which deprived Lincoln of one fourth of his army. In June Lincoln attacked the enemies works near Stono

Ferry, and a warm action ensued. It was bravely fought, but not decisive. On this occasion, after being without sleep the previous night, he was ten hours on horse-back at one sitting. In September, Count D'Estaing arrived off Savannah, where Lincoln joined him. A siege ensued which was too slow an operation for D'Estaing's temperament, he determined on an assault, against the opinion of Lincoln, as a few days would have put them in possession of the place. On the 9th of October, D'Estaing and Lincoln made the assault, leading in person their respective columns. They nobly contented for possession of the town, and it was the bloodiest engagement of the Southern war, but less successful than bloody. The Count re-embarked his troops for the West Indies, and Lincoln re-crossed the Savannah, and made his head-quarters at Charleston. On the 30th of March General Clinton encamped in great strength, in front of the American lines. On the 10th of April, having completed his first parallel, the garrison was summoned to surrender. On the 20th a second parallel was completed and the garrison a second time summoned to surrender, which was rejected. On the 8th of May a third summons was sent, and on the 11th the garrison surrendered. It is conceded that great credit is due to Lincoln, for his judicious and spirited conduct in baffling for three months, the greatly superior forces of Sir Henry Clinton and Admiral Arbuthnot. Though Charleston and the army were lost, yet by their long defence, the British plans were retarded and deranged, and North Carolina saved for the remainder of the year 1780. So establish-



ed was the spotless reputation of the vanquished General, that he continued to enjoy the undiminished respect and confidence of the Congress, the army and the Commander-in-chief." His exertions and fatigue during this campaign, were such as few constitutions would have been able to endure. He was on the lines night and day, and for the last fortnight never undressed to sleep. Having been exchanged for Major General Philips, he joined the army under Washington in the Spring of 1781, on the North River. When the army moved to Virginia, Lincoln conducted it on the route as Washington and Rochambeau preceded it and joined the army under La-Fayette and Steuben, then there. He commanded the central division of the army at the Seige of Yorktown. The duty of conducting the conquered army to the field where their arms were deposited, and receiving the customary submission, was assigned him. Immediately after this he was appointed Secretary of war, with the power to retain his rank in the army. At the end of two years he resigned this office. On the acceptance of his resignation, Congress passed the following resolve. "Resolved, that the resignation of Major General Lincoln, as Secretary of War for the United States, be accepted, in consideration of the earnest desire which he expresses, the objects of the war being so happily accomplished, to retire to private life; and that he be informed, that the United States, in Congress assembled, entertain a high sense of his perseverance, fortitude, activity and meritorious services in the field, as well as of his diligence, fidelity and capacity in the execution of the office of

Secretary of War, which important trust he has discharged to their entire approbation." In 1787, he was commander of the troops sent to quell the famous Shay's Insurrection, which he happily suppressed during that severe winter, by his activity and prudence. The same year he was elected Lieutenant Governor. In 1789 was appointed Collector of the Ports of Boston and Charlestown, which latter office enabled him to repurchase that part of his patrimony he had been compelled to sell for the support of his family; he was as humane as brave, in private life few men have been more respected, he was a practical and rational christian from his childhood up. The last and most important office he ever held, was that of Deacon in the Congregational church, of which the learned and pious Dr. Shute was pastor. This office he held till his death, in the same church, formed on primitive, apostolic principles, in which the Elder or Teacher was considered and treated, only as first among equals.

He was elected to this office by the brethren of the church, for his good report and wisdom, and his humility enabled him to perform all the duties of the office to the acceptance of the brethren. He would not have accepted the office from any source less pure. He and his departed friend had hazarded their lives in defence of this principle in the church, as fully as for the right and ability of the people to govern themselves in civil affairs. They had no reverence for the assumed and usurped power of kings or prelates.

They felt and knew that the union of church and

state, had brought on earth the greatest calamities! It has proved the greatest misfortune to both, and history since has been a detail of the woes, crimes, cruelties and blood shedding it has caused. It has blunted and broken the heaven tempered weapons of the former, destined to reach and pierce the heart of every foe to man, perverted and corrupted its mightiest influences, seduced it from its appropriate sphere, from which it showered balm and healing, and benedictions on the nations, made its ministers hirelings and courtiers, and spell bound its power to bless and save. Since it has not been the chaste bride of Christ, but the prostitute of the world, the embrace has been fatal to its hopes and the accomplishment of its mission. He said his kingdom was not of this world, he desired not its aid or favor. It was instituted to confront the world, to rebuke its passions, ambition, pride, selfishness, lust; to fight against its powers, and the rulers of darkness and corruption. Its legitimate position is one of conflict with the world, till that shall be brought under subjection to the authority and reign of Jesus. Their union has been a continual betrayal of his cause, and never will go forth victorious, attracting, charming, subduing all hearts by its beauty, love, sympathy, sublimity, till they are effectually and entirely separated. While christianity is made to dance attendance on kings, to aid their ambitious purposes, to subserve their designs against the rights, welfare and dignity of man—while mixed up with their policy, and but the creature of their will and power, though she may lift high her mitred head in their courts, and

shine as bright as the sun in imperial gems and robes, her true glory is departed ; her power has become weakness, and she has fallen. The kiss of Judas was emblematic of this coalition and betrayal. The church and the world met together and kissed each other. In that kiss was poison and death ; the energies of the kingdom that bore in its bosom the salvation of man, were paralyzed and bound. She that was to lead captivity captive, is herself a captive ; she that was to turn and overturn till he, whose right it is to reign, has accepted terms of capitulation, thrown down her arms, and hushed her voice of censure and denunciation. She speaks only in silken tones, and lies quietly in the arms of the wicked one she was sent on earth to subdue. From that time the triumphant progress of christianity was stayed.

When she ascended the throne of the Cæsars, she deserted her own. When a temporal sceptre was placed in her hand, she let fall that in which resided a portion of omnipotence. When crowned with the diadem of earth the glory of the Most High no longer irradiated her : the one of thorns was better.—Jesus on the cross thrills the heart of the world ; in palaces, clothed in purple, he can hardly reach it by the feeblest influence, and is nearly or quite powerless. If Constantine instead of taking the church under his protection, and loading it with wealth and favor, had kindled the fires of martyrdom throughout his empire, he would much more effectually consulted its true interest. What propriety is there of uniting it to the state ! Is it not sufficient

unto itself! Has it not within itself all the resources requisite to fulfil its mission! Can it not stand alone! Why lean on an arm of flesh while that of the Almighty is stretched forth for its defence. Why look for human aid, as though there was cause to fear for its security? It is built on the rock of ages! what need then of the sandy foundation of earth. Are not their proper spheres different! One is instituted to protect man's temporal interests, the other to promote his spiritual welfare; one to suppress and punish crime, the other to subdue passion and purify the heart; one deals with external acts, the other with inward feelings and motives; one labors to conform the individual to positive institutions, the other to subdue him to the laws of conscience and holiness. One strives, by its threatened evils to make him a contented and good citizen; the other, by its promises, and mighty influences, to make him a happy being—an heir of life.

The ends therefore proposed to be effected by each being so diverse, there seems much impropriety in their union, as there certainly has been evil and misfortune proceeding from it. Render unto Cæsar his due; but let him not pervert to his own selfish purposes the things of God. Let him not seize on those divine truths and influences sent on earth for its redemption and make them contribute to its bondage, wrongs and degradation. What perversion! The institution designed to reform, console and bless man, transformed into an instrument of despotism, seduced to throw a mantle of sanctity over the enterprises of kingly craft and policy.



This union has filled the world with infidels and scorners, associated the Savior with the scourgers of mankind, and excited against his religion the hatred of millions. Jesus has been looked upon as in fellowship and communion with tyrants, lending them aid in their warfare against human happiness, freedom and rights ! Was it not this union that converted France into a nation of infidels and atheists ? To gain confidence there as an honest friend of the people, it was deemed necessary to declare one's self an enemy of Christ.

To gain attention as a philanthropist it was necessary to renounce his religion. Not without reason the church was deemed the most formidable obstacle to the progress of society, to the attainment of human freedom and rights. The altar and the throne must be involved in a common ruin. Such are the fruits of joining together what God intended should be kept assunder. The Church and State must be divorced. The work has begun and must go on. The Church will be redeemed from its long captivity, take its appointed position in conflict with the world and go forth once more conquering and to conquer. Then will return the days of the Most High ; then the power of the Gospel to regenerate and bless and save will be revealed, and the ministers of Jesus be clothed with salvation ; and the hearts of all men be drawn unto him, and the dark clouds of centuries be broken and scattered. The necessity of this separation is felt by his true friends every where, and they are preparing themselves for the battle. Long and firm may be, must be the struggle ; but that success will finally attend their efforts admits not a doubt.

He has promised to be with his faithful ones unto the end of the world, and he surely will be with them in their toils, sufferings and sacrifices to free the Church from its thralldom, and to rescue his cause from subserviency to the pride, folly and ambition of its rulers and governments.

Thomas and Lincoln could hardly have considered themselves and countrymen as contending against that oppression which arises directly from a union of Church and State, for their ancestors had left England to avoid it, and been protected in the full enjoyment of them by their charter and the approbation of Oliver Cromwell, as great a man as ever swayed the sceptre of England. They themselves had been educated in these principles, and no part of the United States has preserved the simplicity and purity of Church government, together with right of private judgment in religious concerns, and the sufficiency of the Scriptures in every thing connected with religion, than the people of the old colony of Plymouth. How then must these good men, long since ascended, have been moved, to have known that the declaration had been publicly made in the presence of their descendants, and by a prelate, "That there could not be a church without a bishop," and that bishop to prove his regular descent from Papal Rome. The above incident has been the occasion of the foregoing remarks.

But to return, and to close—it is not only safe to imitate such men as Thomas and Lincoln, but praiseworthy to emulate their virtues and patriotism.

## COLONEL THOMAS KNOWLTON.

---

COLONEL KNOWLTON was descended of respectable English ancestors, who were among the first settlers of Massachusetts, where Thomas was born, November, 1740, in the town of Boxford, county of Essex; from whence he removed, when a lad, with his father, to the town of Ashford, in the Province of Connecticut.

Before he was sixteen years of age he enlisted as a private soldier in the Old French war, and continued in the army between three and four years, during which time he was promoted to the respective offices of Sergeant, Ensign, and Lieutenant. During this war he was engaged in several close actions, in one of which he came in contact, hand to hand, in the woods, with a French officer, when he flung down his musket and closed in with him, they both fell, the Frenchman uppermost, but Knowlton extricated himself and succeeded in taking the life of his adversary.

He was in the action of August, 1758, when Major Rogers in command of five hundred Rangers, British and Provincials, was attacked when on his march in the woods, by an equal number of French and Indians. Rogers in his account of the battle, says, "Major Put

nam being in front of his men when the fire began, the enemy rushed in, took him, one lieutenant, and two others prisoners, and considerably deranged others of the party, who afterwards rallied and did good service, particularly Lieutenant Durkee, who, notwithstanding his wounds, one in his thigh and the other in his wrist, kept in the action the whole time, encouraging his men with great resolution and earnestness. In short, officers and soldiers throughout the detachment behaved with such vigor and resolution, as in one hour's time broke the enemy and obliged them to retreat; we kept the field and buried our dead.

When the battle was over, we had missing thirty-three men. The enemy's loss was two hundred and forty killed on the spot, several of whom were Indians." In this action Knowlton belonged to Durkee's party of Provincials, and must have been exposed to the hottest fire of the enemy.

After the capture of Montreal by Sir Jeffrey Amherst, in 1760, which closed the war in North America, one thousand Connecticut troops, under General Lyman, a brave and intelligent officer, went to the siege of the Havanas, which surrendered to the British arms in the year 1762. Lieutenant Knowlton was with Lyman in this expedition. At this siege there was much blood shed, but the Provincials did not arrive 'till a short time before the surrender, and suffered more from the climate than from the balls of the Spaniards. He was challenged by a British officer on his way home from the Havana, in consequence of words spoken in a trifling

conversation, but no duel ensued, as the challenger proposed an adjustment of the affair, which took place before they landed, satisfactorily and honorable to Knowlton.

On his return to Ashford, he married before he was twenty years old, and became a prosperous farmer, and at an unusually early age he became one of the fathers of the town, a select man; in which occupation and office the battle of Lexington found him. On the news of this event, the militia company of Ashford, immediately assembled, and Knowlton with his musket, with them, for the purpose of marching to the American camp at Cambridge.

They were destitute of a captain, and by a unanimous vote elected Knowlton to the vacant office, which he readily and cheerfully accepted. At this occurrence, the mortification of the Lieutenant was so great that he declined marching with the company. This did not arise from want of capacity or patriotism on the part of Lieutenant Marcy, but the greater confidence they justly placed in Knowlton, arising from his former services, which they must have well known; and they had good reason to believe they would meet something very different from mere parade or children's play in the course of the expedition they were undertaking.

Knowlton arrived at Cambridge previous to the battle of Bunker's Hill, in which action he took a conspicuous part. He was the only officer, except those from Massachusetts, who had the honor to march with the gallant Colonel Prescott, on the evening of the 16th of June



1775, to take possession of, occupy and defend Bunker's Hill. He, with a double command of four lieutenants and one hundred and twenty men, had that honor, although the youngest captain of his regiment.

The then estimate of his character as an officer and a gentleman, doubtless procured him that high distinction. His conduct the next day in battle, and his after conduct, during his short military career of fifteen months, will show how well he sustained the estimate then formed of him.

On that day, previous to the arrival of the gallant Stark with the New Hampshire line, he was ordered to take post at the extreme left of the rail fence towards the Mystic river; Stark on his arrival in the afternoon occupied that part nearest the redoubt. Here, in their several positions, Prescott, Stark and Knowlton fought the battle independently of each other, although Prescott was senior and defended the most important post. Before the rail fence, the two first attacks of the enemy were chiefly made, for the purpose of getting in the rear of Prescott and carrying his redoubt; and here they suffered most severely, their dead covering the ground, and lying, as Stark often said, "as thick as sheep in a foal." In this action Knowlton nobly sustained himself, and lost more men than Prescott or Starke, according to the number he commanded, except the loss sustained by Prescott when retreating from the redoubt, when stormed by the British column which passed round on both sides of the redoubt, giving him an oblique fire, killing more than double the number killed in the action.

In this trying situation, Prescott abandoned his post for want of amunition, and support from his countrymen on Bunker's Hill within six hundred yards of him, and Stark compelled to follow him from the same cause, Knowlton was cool and self possessed. He retreated with young troops, in good order, with celerity and safety; the enemy being unloaded by their fire on Prescott. From this day he was justly considered the first officer of his grade in the army. He received from a gentleman of Boston, whose name is not now recollected, for his distinguished gallantry and good conduct at Breed's Hill, a *gold laced hat*, an elegant *sash*, and *gold breast plate*. The gold breast plate is now in the possession of a descendant.

Colonel Aaron Burr, speaking of him, some few years before his death, said, "He received the full account of this battle from Knowlton's own mouth, and he believed if he had the whole direction of the day, it would have resulted more fortunately. Its being objected that he should not be placed before Prescott and Stark, he observed that was not what he intended—but that an able and efficient officer was wanting to superintend the whole, as *they*, as well as Knowlton had their particular posts to defend; and a great fault rested somewhere for not supporting them." It being then observed that the rapidity of his promotion indicated his merit, he replied, "it was impossible to promote such an officer too rapidly." It has been justly said of those troops which could be induced to take part in the action that day—"The military annals of the word rarely furnish an

achievement which equals the firmness and courage displayed on that proud day by the gallant band of Americans; and it certainly stands first in the brilliant events of our war. When future generations shall inquire where are the men who gained the highest prize of glory in the arduous contest which ushered in our nation's birth, upon Prescott and his companions in arms will the eye of history beam."

Soon after this action Captain Knowlton was promoted to a majority, in which capacity he served during the siege of Boston, increasing in the esteem of his compatriots in arms, and the confidence of the Commander in Chief. "On the 8th day of January, [1776] it having been determined to deprive the British of the houses in Charlestown, below Bunker's hill, a detachment was ordered for the purpose. One hundred men from the first brigade, a like number from Frye's brigade, with Captains Williams, Gould and Wyman; Lieutenants Foster, Shaw, Patterson and Trafton, and Ensign Cheny; the whole under the command of Major Knowlton, aided by Brigade Majors Henly and Carey.

The detachment marched between eight and nine o'clock in the evening, and the object was effected without the loss of a man. Several British soldiers were taken prisoners. The garrison of Bunker's Hill works, commenced a brisk fire down the hill, towards the houses but no damage was sustained."

Only those acquainted with the situation of Bunker's Hill and the places adjacent, at the time of this expedition, can fully understand General Heath in his above

description, and the danger and delicacy of the operation assigned Major Knowlton. Knowlton had to pass from the main land in Charlestown, over the neck or low grounds and mill dams to this hill, partly below and around it and its garrison; to fire many scattering houses, seventeen in the whole, and so to conduct and dispose his force as to secure a safe retreat, in a very dark night, at a time when the greater part of the British army were cantoned on Bunker's Hill. Both objects were completely effected under a brisk fire from the enemy's batteries, without the loss of a man.

Lieutenant Trafton, of the party, observed many years after, "that it was considered at the time an operation of great hazard, especially in securing a retreat; but we had entire confidence in the officer commanding, that he could effect it if any officer in the army could do it. For myself, I had determined, rather than fail in the part assigned me—the burning of certain designated houses—to lose my life; for our regiment was disgraced, on the day of Breed's Hill battle, by the conduct of our colonel, and I would not survive a personal disgrace." Lieutenant Trafton was afterwards promoted, and served through the war with the reputation of a brave and good officer.

"On the evening when Major Knowlton set fire to the houses in Charlestown, the farce of the "*Blockade of Boston*," of which General Burgoyne was the reputed author, was performed. The figure designed to burlesque General Washington was dressed in an uncouth

style, with a large wig and long rusty sword, attended by an orderly sergeant in his country dress, having on his shoulder an old rusty gun seven or eight feet long. At the moment this figure appeared on the stage, one of the regular seargents came running on the stage, threw down his bayonet, and exclaimed, "*The yankees are attacking our works on Bunker's Hill,*" Those of the audience who were unacquainted with the different parts, supposed that this belonged to the farce; but when General Howe called out, "*Officers to your alarm posts,*" they were undeceived; all was confusion and dismay; and among the ladies, shrieking and fainting ensued."

After Washington obtained possession of Boston, and the army removed to New York, Knowlton was promoted to a Lieutenant Colonelcy. At all times enjoying the entire confidence of his commander; who, when wishing to obtain an officer to pass from New York to Long Island, to gain accurate intelligence of the enemy's forces and situation in that quarter, consulted with Knowlton on the subject. The wishes of the Commander-in-chief were made known by him to a number of officers, without on his part, using any arguments for or against their undertaking it. This duty, no doubt, was performed by him in accordance with the previously received instructions of Washington. Captain Nathan Hale of the Connecticut line, a young gentleman of education and great promise, of his own mere notion, undertook it; was captured by the enemy and executed as a spy. Congress have recently erected a monument to his memory. In



the unfortunate and disastrous battle of Brooklyn Heights Knowlton by great effort and good fortune gained the American camp before the enemy with an overpowering force closed upon the American rear, thereby saving himself and his command from being made prisoners with General Sullivan and Lord Sterling. The American troops were now withdrawn from Long and Governors Islands, and in a few days New York city evacuated, in a manner which shew they were overcome with their fears. On this occasion Washington's mortification was extreme, and his com-patriot Greene said of him, "He appeared to seek death rather than life." In this condition of the American army a halt was made at Harlem Heights and the Commander-in-chief regained his equanimity, although the British in his front reached from the East to the North River, across the whole Island of New York. The night after the retreat, Knowlton at the head of one hundred and fifty Rangers was ordered to guard the American camp, and by his vigilance prevent the approach of the enemy unnoticed. The next morning, he commenced skirmishing with the enemy, the Commander-in-chief immediately rode to the advanced posts of the army, in order to make in person, such arrangements as this movement might require. Receiving from Knowlton the probable numbers and position of the enemy, immediately reinforced him with a part of a Virginia regiment under Major Leach, directed him to gain their rear, while he amused them with the appearance of making disposition to attack them in front. The plan succeeded, but Knowlton not knowing the precise situ-

ation of the enemy, commenced his attack, rather on their flank than rear, when a very warm action ensued. In a short time Leach was carried from the ground mortally wounded, and soon after Knowlton fell. The action was continued by the Captains with great animation who were re-inforced, but to prevent a general engagement Washington recalled his troops to their entrenchments. The British loss in killed and wounded was more than double that sustained by the Americans. Knowlton was the senior officer on the ground, he was conscious that his wound was mortal from the moment he received it, for to a soldier near him, who offered his assistance, he said, "Continue to do your duty in the action for you can do me no good." He was carried from the field in a waggon, and died in about an hour; in this time Washington saw him—regretted his situation and commended him for his gallantry and good conduct on all occasions. What a moment for the death of a hero! assured of victory and the sincere condolence and approbation of such a man as Washington, the immortal Wolf might have envied him such a death. In general orders the next day, September 17th, Washington says, "The General most heartily thanks the troops commanded yesterday by Major Leach, who first advanced upon the enemy, and the others who resolutely supported them. Their behaviour yesterday was such a contrast to that of some of the troops the day before, as must show what may be done when officers and soldiers exert themselves. Once more, therefore, the General calls upon officers and men to act up to the noble cause

in which they are engaged, and to support the honor and liberties of their country. The gallant and brave Colonel Knowlton, who would have been an honor to any country, having fallen yesterday while gloriously fighting, Captain Brown is to take command of the party lately led by Colonel Knowlton." Washington, in a letter to the President of Congress of the 18th of September reiterates his high opinion of Knowlton.

In his person Colonel Knowlton was near or quite six feet high, erect and elegant in form, made for activity rather than strength. His education was respectable, although not collegiate. Pleasing in his address he never failed of making himself acceptable to those with whom he associated.

He never lessened his character by ostentation or self-complacency; and all cheerfully granted him the applause due to his merit. Always to be found where the battle raged, pressing into close action. An old soldier who served under him, said, "The Colonel was the mildest man he ever knew; nothing of a rough or harsh nature ever passed his lips, so that he was universally respected by those under his command, as well as by those associated with him in command." He left a widow and eight children, all of whom were respectable in society. His oldest son Frederick, was with him when he was shot, and died within a few years past.

Sixty-eight years have elapsed since the death of this great and good man, who would have been an ornament to any country; and what has been done by his country in justice to themselves, and in honor of his memory?

Nothing. His remains are interred within the city of New-York, and the place where, not difficult to be ascertained, even at this late day. Have the United States, in whose service he fell—the State of Connecticut, whose favorite son he was—or the City of New-York, on whose soil he bled, ever thought of erecting even a slab to his memory? We are compelled to give the mortifying negative to this inquiry.\*

\*Since writing the above, the Historical Society of the City of New-York have appointed a Committee, to ascertain where Knowlton fell, with the design of doing something in honor of his memory.

## ALEXANDER SCAMMELL.

---

Doctor Samuel Leslie Scammell, the father of Alexander, arrived at Boston from Portsmouth, England, in the year 1738, and settled in that part of Mendon now Milford, Worcester county, Massachusetts : Dr. Scammell had two sons, Samuel Leslie, born in 1739, and Alexander born in 1744, and died in 1753, aged forty-five ; leaving his two sons in charge and under the care and guidance of the Reverend Amariah Frost of Mendon, the elder until he was qualified for the study of Physic, the younger until he was fitted to enter college.

Mr. Frost was a most worthy Congregational minister and able instructor. He died at an advanced age in 1792, after having had the satisfaction of seeing his wards distinguished in their respective professions, and at all times, with their friends, acknowledging their obligations to him for his fidelity to them, and his purity of character, and ability as a religious teacher.

When the contest for self-government was approaching, no safer or more suitable instructor could be found than an educated New England clergyman. Alexander the subject of this notice, graduated at Harvard College in



1769, from whence he went to the county of Plymouth and taught school in the towns of Kingston and Plymouth. In the same year was formed, by the descendants of the first settlers of Plymouth, Isaac Lothrop, Pelham Winslaw, Thomas Lothrop, Elkanah Cushman, John Thomas, Edward Winslaw Jr., and John Watson, *The Old Colony Club*. The same year on the 22d day of December, was celebrated, for the first time, the landing of our forefathers, and in the evening the club, with invited guests, not members, joined the club, among whom, were the two grammar schoolmasters, Alexander Scammell and Peleg Wadsworth. Scammell and Wadsworth were classmates at Harvard. Gen. Wadsworth, late of Portland, Maine, was an active and brave officer of the revolution, and for many years after the war, an upright and intelligent member of Congress.

In the year 1770, Scammell and Wadsworth both attended the anniversary of the club, by invitation, for neither of them appear to have been members. The celebration was concluded in the evening, by singing a song composed by Mr. Scammell. In 1771, Mr. Scammell, was, by his desire, unanimously voted in a member of the club.

In 1772, he repaired to Portsmouth, N. H., where under the auspices of a cousin of his name in the employment of the government, he entered upon the business of surveying and exploring lands and of the royal navy timber. In the interval of suspended occupation, he kept school a short time at Berwick. He was one of the proprietors of the town of Shapleigh, Maine,

and Clerk of that Association. He assisted Captain Holland in making surveys for his map of New Hampshire. About this time, he appears to be serving on board the sloop of war Lord Chatham, bound from Piscataqua river to Boston, to send despatches, plans and reports to the lords of the Treasury. This vessel mounted several swivels, and carried small arms, and her place of rendezvous was Falmouth, now Portland. Previous to the revolution he entered on the study of the law with General Sullivan of Durham, N. H., whom he styles, "an excellent instructor and worthy patron." His worthy patron was a member of the Congress of 1774 and 5, and the latter year was appointed a brigadier general by that Congress.

Gen. Sullivan on accepting this appointment, would have been more than willing that Mr. Scammell should have remained in his office and taken charge of his legal business, which was extensive and lucrative. But when a whole people rose and took arms to claim and defend the right of self-government, a mind like Scammell's must have been elevated to grandeur in such a cause, and to have remained shut up in a law office, almost within sound of the enemy's artillery at Boston, would have been annihilation to him. He immediately joined the army at Cambridge, and was appointed Brigade Major to Sullivan's Brigade. In this capacity he served during the siege of Boston, without any opportunity offering in which he or the Brigade were particularly distinguished. He served with the Brigade in 1776

and partook of all the disasters of the army in and about New-York.

Sullivan had been promoted previous to the defeat of the army at Brooklyn, and whether Scammell was attached to his division at that time is not known, but it is certain he was not taken prisoner with him on that occasion. About this time he was promoted and attached to Lee's division and independant command before the close of the year, and the movements of Lee at this time, will be here mentioned, as Scammell's situation as Adjutant General gave him a perfect insight into the intentions of that errattick man, but able general.

As soon as it was ascertained that General Carleton had abandoned all hostile intentions against Crown Point, and gone into winter quarters, in the month of October, Gates dismissed his militia, left Col. Wayne at Ticonderoga, repaired with his army to Albany, where he received the order of Schuyler to reinforce General Washington. A part of this force, Gen. St. Clair's command, was directed to join Washington, but were intercepted by Lee and ordered to join his division. Lee at this time was determined to increase his forces so as to be able to strike a successful blow on some of the enemy's cantonments, and not unite with Washington, as repeatedly ordered. He ordered Heath, who commanded in the Highlands, to detach the better part of his forces, and place them under his command, which was refused, as contrary to his written orders from the commander-in-chief. Lee ordered Scammell, to perform this duty, and he would have been obeyed but for the timely and

prudent interference of Gov. Clinton. Lee moved his force to Baskingridge, near Morristown. Here Major Wilkinson, on his way from Gates to Washington called on him and shew him Gates' letter to Washington. Here he was called on by Scammell from Gen. Sullivan, who was encamped with the troops for orders of march on the 13th of December, 1776; Lee hesitated, asked for the manuscript map of the country, which was produced and spread upon the table; Lee traced with his finger the route to Princeton; after a close inspection said to Scammell, "Tell Gen. Sullivan to march down towards Pluckamin, that I soon will be with him." This was off the route he had been ordered to take, and directly on that towards Brunswick and Princeton, combine these circumstances with his letter to Gen. Gates, which was written that morning, and we have a clue to his views and designs. The letter was borne off by Major Wilkinson, unfolded, to Sullivan, and is as follows:—

*Baskingridge, Dec. 13th, 1776.*

MY DEAR GATES,

The ingenious manœuvre of Fort Washington, has unhinged the goodly fabric we had been building. There never was so damned a stroke. *Entre nous*, a certain great man is most damnably deficient. He has thrown me into a situation, where I have a choice of difficulties; if I stay in this province, I risk myself and army; and if I do not stay, the province is lost forever. I have neither guides, cavalry, medicines, money, shoes or stockings. I must act with greatest circumspection.

Tories are in my front, rear, and on my flanks ; the mass of the people is strongly contaminated ; in short, unless something, which I do not expect, turns up we are lost ; our counsels have been weak to the last degree. As to what relates to yourself, if you think you can be in time to aid the General, I would have you by all means ; you will at least save your army. It is said that the Whigs are determined to set fire to Philadelphia ; if they strike this decisive stroke, the day will be our own ; but unless it is done, all chance of liberty in any part of the globe is forever vanished. Adieu my dear friend ! God bless you !

CHARLES LEE."

At the moment this letter was finished Lee was surrounded by the enemy's horse, commanded by Col. Harcourt and captured with his aid. Wilkinson escaped by secreting himself in the house. Lee had not breakfasted, although it was ten o'clock in the morning, having been detained in writing the above letter and in an altercation with certain militia corps, particularly the Connecticut light horse, and the call of Scammell. Lee was hurried off, bare-headed, in his slippers, blanket coat and collar open. The capture of Lee, at the time, was felt as a public calamity, and cast a gloom over the country. He merited severe punishment for his neglect of duty and disobedience of orders, and received it from an unexpected hand. His offence was well understood in the army, and his misfortune unpitied by those who reflected on the cause of it. The tenor of Lee's letter



to Gates convicted him of discontent, insubordination and disrespect to Washington, but might have saved him from the suspicion of defection to the cause he had espoused.

It is more than probable that Lee had come to the deliberate determination to violate his orders, trust to his fortune, and hazard his fame on the issue of some bold enterprise. The officers about him believed that if Lee had not been made prisoner, he would have attacked the British post at Princeton the next morning, where the superiority of his force would have insured him success. He had reduced himself to the dilemma of abiding the sentence of a general court martial, for disobedience of peremptory orders, or by some daring and brilliant exploit excited such popular applause as would not only justify his offence, but give him the chief command. Sullivan on the receipt of the intelligence of Lee's capture, immediately directed Scammell to alter the route of the army, so as to gain Washington without unnecessary loss of time. This was done in time for him and his division to take part in the battle of Trenton and Princeton a few days after. Gates' division joined Washington, but he left the army without the knowledge or permission of Washington before the battles of Trenton. It will be seen that Wilkinson has been relied on principally for the above facts, and will be further made use of, with this acknowledgment. In this gloomy period of the revolutionary contest, it is impossible to pass unnoticed the American Chief. "Born with iron nerves, and an unbending dignity of port, which distin-

guished all his actions, and struck the most presumptuous with awe ; amidst these scenes, he was serene, tranquil and self-possessed, exciting the admiration of his followers, and exhibiting the example of a chief determined to brave danger and dare death in support of a just cause ; whilst the invincible firmness of Congress, exhibited the rare example of a popular assembly, united in principle, inflexible in purpose, and regardless of consequences. Not to one man then, but to such a Congress and such a Chief, supported by a handful of brave men who adhered to the cause of their country, are these United States indebted for the cheap purchase of their liberty and independence."

No American should ever forget, that when our chief was deserted by his first and second in command, Lee and Gates, the former able and brave, the latter proud and vain, but both determined to disgrace him, and both foreign military adventurers, then was he nobly supported by real Americans, Sullivan, Greene, Mercer, Knox, Stark, Scammell, and many others equally brave and patriotic. And when Washington had determined to risk his life on the issue of his move upon Trenton, his army as nobly supported as he led. This should be a standing lesson to this country, never to place its destinies in the hands of foreigners, or suffer them to hold high places either in the civil or military department. The above is the more minutely narrated, because Scammell was in all these movements, the severest and most gloomy time of the revolution, both as to suffering and action.

Acting always with the main army or its great divisions, few materials respecting him as an individual are now left. And most of those few, his correspondence with his brother and relatives during the war, were many years ago handed to a gentleman in Boston, with the design of writing his memoir, who was fully competent to the performance, but whose death prevented the completion of the task he had assumed. This correspondence has never been recovered, and is now irrecoverably lost. This correspondence might now be of great interest, as his situation of adjutant general gave him an opportunity of being acquainted with the secret springs of all the movements in the army, and had prudence permitted him to have communicated them, as in many instances it might, its value must be seen and appreciated.

In the campaign of 1777, he was placed at the head of the first regiment in the New-Hampshire line, at Ticonderoga, under General St. Clair and the Brigade commanded by General Poor. In the retreat of the army from that fortress to Saratoga, he partook of all its fatigues, deprivations and mortifications. In the first action against Burgoyne, fought by detached regiments, no general officer being on the field, commenced by Dearborn's light infantry and Morgan's riflemen, Scammell was closely engaged and wounded. After the surrender of Burgoyne, Poor's Brigade to which Scammell was attached, was ordered down the river to oppose Sir Henry Clinton who had captured forts Montgomery and Clinton, and was making further depredations on

the Hudson, but before its arrival Clinton had retired to New-York. From thence Poor's Brigade and other troops were ordered by Colonel Hamilton, who had been dispatched from Philadelphia by the Commander-in-Chief, for the express purpose, to join him. This order was not obeyed by the general commanding in the Highlands, so that Poor and the other reinforcements did not reach Washington in season to operate against Howe and compel him to surrender his army, as would have been the case, in all human probability, had these reinforcements arrived in season, as ordered. This made a deep impression on the mind of Washington, and by letter of November 19th 1777, he says to the general commanding in the Highlands, "I could wish that in future my orders may be immediately complied with, without arguing upon the propriety of them. If any accident ensues from obeying them, the fault will be upon me and not upon you." The army was encamped in the vicinity of Philadelphia the ensuing winter, when Scammell was appointed adjutant general, Colonel Pickering having been promoted to the office of quarter master general. From this time to 1781, he continued in this office, and identified in all the movements of the main army. In the month of June 1778, the army left its cantonment and commenced pursuit of Sir H. Clinton, whose object was New-York city. Clinton's march was not a hurried one, for he consumed eight days in gaining forty miles, thereby embarrassing Washington by keeping him in ignorance of the route he would finally take. In this long march and subsequent battle at Monmouth,



Scammell performed all the duties of his important and responsible office to the entire approbation of the commander, and every individual in the army, for no one ever held that office, who was more beloved and respected.

After the battle of Monmouth, he was directed by the commander-in chief, to place his old General, Lee, under arrest. The opinion of the army was divided as to the guilt of Lee on the charges preferred against him, except his disrespect to Washington. He might have been acquitted of the others had not Washington been considered the complainant. This is rendered probable from the division in Congress on its approval of the sentence of the court martial, only seven states voting for approval. It seems at this day strange that so intelligent a court should have found the facts they did, and rendered the judgment of suspension for one year thereon; when from the then existing rules and articles of war, he should have been shot. Scammell did express the opinion, in presence of many of the officers of the army, that Washington never had so fair an opportunity of gaining as decisive a victory over the enemy as at Monmouth, had Lee done his whole duty. This opinion, no doubt correct, had great weight in the army, and preponderated heavily against Lee. The main army in the years 1779 and 1780, were in a good measure inactive, and gave time for them to consider and muse over their future prospects. Scammell in the few letters of his which remain and are to be found, addressed to Colonel Peabody, a member of Congress from New-Hampshire, and



a member of the military committee, are here inserted, which mark strongly the state of his own feelings, and that of the army.

*Camp, Middle Brook, April 2d, 1779.*

DEAR SIR,

“Relying on your friendship, I must entreat you to assist me in procuring certain certificates and copies of receipts, which I find absolutely necessary in settling my accounts with the auditors, who are very strict. I have wrote Esq. Thompson particularly on the subject. Captain Gilman, the bearer, will likewise be able to let you into the matter circumstantially.

I am almost tired of quarreling with Great Britain—wish we could reduce them to reason, and a proper sense of their inability. They seem to be determined to die in the last ditch, and that we shall feel the effects of disappointed malice the ensuing campaign. I further fear, that the war will doom me to old bachelorism—however, content myself with this consideration, that there is enough of the breed already, though this consideration don't fully correspond with my feelings on the opening of Spring. Let us establish our Independence on a lasting and honorable foundation, and I shall be happy at all events. It seems half pay for life, for the officers of the Pensylvania and Maryland line, is established by the respective states; also half pay to the officers' widows since the war began. How this step will be looked upon by the other States, I can't say. This I will venture to affirm, that it would increase

legitimate subjects to the States, as it would encourage our officers, who have no wives, to marry, and proceed in obedience to the first command. At present, the young women dread us as the picture of poverty; and the speculators, to our great mortification, are running away with the best of them, whilst we are the painful spectators of the meat being taken out of our mouths, and devoured by a parcel of ———. Give my sincere compliments to inquiring friends—Mrs. Peabody in particular.

Your friend, and humble servant,  
ALEXANDER SCAMMELL."

COLONEL PEABODY."

[Extract.]

*West Point, September 29th, 1779.*

"Does Congress mean to make the officers any permanent consideration? or do they intend to coax them on by doing a little and promising them a great deal, till the war is over, and then leave them without money, (consequently without friends;) without estates, and many without property or constitutions, the two latter of which they have generously sacrificed in defence of their country. This is the language of the officers almost universally, from all the States. My station renders it my duty to make every thing as easy and quiet as possible. But I shudder at the consequences, as I am convinced that in the approaching winter, we shall loose many of our brave officers, who must resign or doom themselves to want and misery by remaining

longer in the best of causes, and which in justice should entitle them to liberal considerations and rewards. That men who have braved death, famine, and every species of hardship, in defence of their liberties and fighting for their country, should thereby be reduced to slavery, or what is equally bad, beggary, will be an eternal stigma upon the United States, and prevent proper men from ever stepping forth in defence of their country again. The bearer, Mr. Guild, a tutor in Harvard College, is an honest, clever, sensible whig; whatever civility you show him will add an obligation on yours truly,

A. SCAMMELL,"

NATHANIEL PEABODY, Esq."

*Head Quarters Steenrapie, near Hackensack Old Bridge, }  
Sept. 5 1780. }*

"DEAR SIR,

I am extremely happy to have ocular demonstration that you are well enough to brandish the goose-quill again. When I had the disagreeable news of your being dangerously ill, I wished to ride to Morristown to see you. I attempted to write, but business permitted neither.

"The army regrets the recalling decree of Congress, and that your committee should be absent from the army at this critical juncture, when famine daily extends her threatening baleful sceptre. What will be the consequence of the present system, of supplies? Are we to be in continual danger of a dissolution? Must the United States of America, replete with resources—full of men, rolling in luxuries—strong in allies—entered on

the scale of nations under a solemn appeal to Heaven, languish in the field—her veterans fainting, her officers at the head of raw troops, obliged to risk their lives and reputation; with troops counting the moments in painful anxiety, when they shall return home and leave us with scattered ranks? If the regiments are not filled for the war, our cause must fail, I am bold to pronounce. Not a continental officer, I fear, will be left in the field, if he must every six months, become a drill sergeant. It is too mortifying to risk a six years reputation with inexperienced troops. Our good and great general, I fear, will sink under the burthen, though he has been possessed of the extremest fortitude hitherto, which has enabled him to be equal to every difficulty, and to surmount what to human eye appeared impossible. But a continual dropping will impress a stone, and a bow too long strained, loses its elasticity. I have ever cherished hopes, but my patience is almost thread-bare.

“ We yesterday inclined to this place, and took a new position, about two miles from our former one, on the west side of the Hackensack. Our army is remarkably healthy, but frequently fasting without prayers. I condole with you on the disagreeable news from the southward, and lament the fate of so many brave officers and men. After suffering the extremes of hunger and fatigue, to be basely deserted by the militia, and pushed on to be sacrificed, is truly distressing. Hunger occasioned so great desertion, that their numbers were reduced to a handful in comparison with their numbers when they left Maryland. What demon could induce General G.



to advance so far towards the enemy with so few men? And why did he retreat so rapidly, and leave his brave men behind? Wishing you a speedy and perfect recovery of your health, I am,

“Yours truly,

“A. SCAMMELL.

“COL. PEABODY.”

The charge made against General Gates, of wasting *camp divinity* or courage, in the above letter, is supported by General Greene, his successor, who was desirous of apologizing for his misfortune, but admitted that deserting his troops when engaged, under the pretence of rallying the militia, was *fatal* to his reputation as a general. It would have been most fortunate for the country, if Gates had been the only major-general, during the war of Independence, who was deficient in courage and conduct. Col. Scammell, from this time to the treason of Arnold and the execution of Andre, continued in the discharge of the arduous duties of his office. On the day of Andre's execution the whole army was paraded and every general officer present and at his post, except Washington, who never saw Andre. On this solemn occasion, Scammel, as adjutant-general, superintended the execution. The following letter to Colonel Peabody, gives a strong and striking picture of the characters of Arnold and Andre, as well as the effect the treason had on his own mind and that of the army, at the time.



*"Head Quarters, October 3, 1780.*

"DEAR SIR,

"Treason! treason! treason! black as h—ll! That a man so high on the list of fame should be guilty as Arnold, must be attributed not only to original sin but actual transgressions. Heavens and earth! we were all astonishment—each peeping at his next neighbour to see if any treason was hanging about him: nay, we even descended to a critical examination of ourselves. This surprise soon settled down into a fixed detestation and abhorrence of Arnold, which can receive no addition. His treason has unmasked him the veriest villain of centuries past, and set him in true colours. His conduct and sufferings at the northward has, in the eyes of the army and his country, covered a series of base, groveling, dirty, scandalous and rascally peculation and fraud; and the army and country, ever indulgent and partial to an officer who has suffered in the common cause, wished to cover his faults: and we were even afraid to examine too closely, for fear of discovering some of his rascality. Now, after all these indulgences—the partiality of his countrymen, the trust and confidence the commander-in-chief had reposed in him, the prodigious sums that he has pilfered from his country, which has been indulgent enough to overlook his mal-practices,—I say, after all this, it is impossible to paint him in colours sufficiently black. Avarice, cursed avarice, with unbounded ambition, void of every principle of honor, honesty, generosity or gratitude, induced the caitiff to make the first overtures to the enemy—as Andre, the British adjutant-

general, declared upon his honor, when on trial before the general officers. This brave, accomplished officer, was yesterday hanged; not a single spectator but what pitied his untimely fate, although filled with gratitude for the providential discovery; convinced that the sentence was just, and that the law of nations and custom of war justified and made it necessary.

Yet his personal accomplishments, appearance and behaviour, gained him the good wishes and opinion of every person who saw him. He was, perhaps, the most accomplished officer of the age—he met his fate in a manner which did honor to the character of a soldier. Smith the man who harbored him is on trial for his life, and I believe will suffer the same fate. May Arnold's life be protracted under all the keenest stings and reflections of a guilty conscience—be hated and abhorred by all the race of mankind, and finally suffer the excruciating tortures due so great a traitor.

I am in haste,

Your friend and servant,

A. SCAMMELL."

Colonel Scammell's wish and prediction respecting Arnold, was fulfilled certainly in part, for he lived twenty-one years after his treason, in different parts of the world, hated and abhorred by all the race of mankind.

One letter from the Colonel is here inserted, being the only one which has ever come to light.

*"New Windsor, March 9, 1781.*

DEAR SIR.—

I was very sorry to hear you passed by without

calling to see me. I hope before this you have perfectly recovered your health. Your friendship and anxiety for the good of the service, will perhaps make any intelligence from us by no means disagreeable. Now we have got a tolerable supply of provisions, we want men, no recruits have arrived yet, except a few stragglers. The enemy are penetrating into the Southern States in several parts, ravaging, plundering and destroying every thing their licentious, unprincipled murderers choose. Lord Cornwallis, after Morgan's victory, having divested himself of all his baggage, made a most desperate pursuit after Morgan, but was providentially stopped short in his pursuit by the sudden rising of a river, occasioned by a heavy rain after Morgan had forded it. Cornwallis then changed his route, and pursued General Greene, who was obliged to retire before him, to the borders of Virginia, nearly two hundred miles. The rapidity of the pursuit, and retrograde movement of our southern army, I believe prevented the militia of that thinly settled country, from reinforcing General Greene seasonably. However, by the advices this day received, Lord Cornwallis was retiring, and General Greene, in turn, pursuing him. A pretty reinforcement is sent from Virginia to Gen. Greene, which, I hope, may arrive in season to enable General Greene to act offensively, unless Cornwallis is reinforced again. Arnold is speculating upon Tobacco and Negroes in Virginia. Another part of the army has landed in North Carolina. The Marquis had, by the last advices, arrived at the head of the Elk, with the light Infantry of our army. The Grenadiers and light

Infantry of the French army, I expect by this time, have joined him. I most devoutly wish, that the Marquis may ruin the traitor, and catch his party.

We have been obliged to put much to the risk, on account of the weakness of our corps. I hope for success—but it is wrong, exceeding wrong, that the Commander-in-chief, should be put to the dangerous necessity of putting so much to the hazard for the safety of the Southern States. Had our regiments been filled agreeable to the requisition of Congress, Clinton would never have presumed to make such large detachments from New York. I entreat you to make use of your utmost influence to persuade the State to raise and send on their full compliment of recruits as soon as possible; our situation, otherwise, will soon be very critical.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient friend and servant,

COL. PEABODY.

A. SCAMMELL."

The above correspondence does great honor to the head and heart of Colonel Scammell. There is a vein of playfulness, with his old and personal acquaintance, but the main drift and object was to excite to those measures which would secure a lasting and honorable peace.

In July, 1781, before the army left the Highlands on the Hudson, to operate against New York or Yorktown, as circumstances would justify, Scammell at his own request, retired from the office he had so long and satisfactorily filled, and took command of the light Infantry of the army. This corps was selected from the several New England regiments, consisting of the most active



and soldierly young men and officers, to march in advance of the main army, constantly prepared for active and hazardous service. The Colonel was indulged the liberty of choosing his own officers, rejecting those he deemed unfit for his enterprising purpose. This liberty he exercised to the annoyance of some colonels, especially Col. Jackson of Boston, but Scammell was strenuous and always prevailed. This indulgence on the part of Washington, was evidence of his desire not only to gratify the Colonel, but that his popularity and standing in the army was such, that it might be gratified without danger or inconvenience. At the head of this corps, Scammell marched with the army to the vicinity of New-York, where it joined the French army. While in this neighborhood the light infantry was constantly on the watch and alert to meet the enemy in Westchester, but the enemy were too circumspect to indulge them in their wishes while the combined army remained in the vicinity. On the march of the combined army to Yorktown in Virginia, headed, the one by Lincoln, the other by Viominil, Washington and Rochambeau having preceded their armies, the corps of light infantry were conspicuous. The French army as a whole were in better uniform, and perhaps in a more perfect state of discipline than the American, but no corps exceeded the light infantry, commanded by the long acknowledged, first officer of his grade in the army.

During the siege of Yorktown he was mortally wounded and taken. Col. H. Lee of the American Legion, who was present gives the following account of



it, and his estimate of the man : “ Cornwallis, yielding to assurances, from Sir Henry Clinton, too solemn to be slighted, as well as in conformity to the spirit of his orders, renounced his intention of disputing the advance of his adversary ; and giving up his fortified camp, retired in the night to his town position, never doubting that the promised aid would start on the appointed day, and well assured if it did, he should be able to sustain himself until it appeared ; when presuming that a general battle would ensue, he considered it to be his duty in the meantime to preserve rather than cripple his force. His Lordship’s conclusion was certainly correct, disastrous as was the consequence of his mistaken confidence. This nocturnal movement did not pass unperceived by our guards ; and Colonel Scammell, officer of the day, put himself at the head of a reconnoitering party with the dawn of light to ascertain its character and extent. Advancing close to the enemy’s position, he fell in with a detachment of the legion dragoons, who instantly charged our party. In the rencontre Scammell was mortally wounded and taken. He soon expired. This was the severest blow experienced by the allied army throughout the siege : not an officer in our army surpassed in personal worth and professional ability this experienced soldier. He had served from the commencement of the war in the line of New Hampshire, and when Col. Pickering, adjutant general of the army, succeeded general Greene as quarter-master general, Col. Scammell was selected by the commander-in-chief to fill the important and confidential station—from which

post he had lately retired, for the purpose of taking an active part, at the head of a battalion of light troops, in the meditated operation."

Col. Scammell did not die immediately of his wound, as might be supposed by the above account, but lived six days after.

Dr. Thatcher, the surgeon of his regiment, says he was wounded after he surrendered. This fact could only be known from Scammell himself, and his surgeon might have been permitted to have seen him before his death, though he does not state the fact. At the request of Gen. Washington, Lord Cornwallis allowed him to be carried to Williamsburg, where he died, and where a monument is erected to his memory,

" Which conquering armies from their toils returned,  
Rear'd to his glory, while his fate they mourn'd."

Col. Scammell in person, was exactly what could be wished, for the fatigues, pomp and parade of war, six feet and two inches in height, and not too much encumbered with flesh. As an officer, he was intelligent, high-minded, honorable and brave. With an early and finished education, his mind was combining and comprehensive, decisive, prompt and energetic in action.

In the social circle he was easy and even playful, and no officer could approach Washington so familiarly without offence. Of all the gentlemen, who held the office of adjutant general, among whom were those excellent officers and high-minded patriots, Pickering

and Hand, none had the entire confidence of the whole army in an equal degree. The common soldier, thirty and forty years after the close of the war, always spoke of him with delight, affection and respect ; declaring the army were always satisfied, whatever were their wants, deprivations or dangers, when the general orders concluded, " By his Excellency's command, Alexander Scammell adjutant general," it was sufficient for them to know that these two officers were in camp. Col. Scammell left no direct descendants, never having been married. But the children and grand-children of his brother are still living in his native town, highly respected. To show in what estimation he was held by his compatriots in arms, his name has been most honorably borne up, and could he know by whom, it would be a pleasing recollection : three officers of the revolution, his personal friends, and among the most intelligent and patriotic, gave his name to their sons. General Peleg Wadsworth, recently of Portland, of the same class at Harvard with him, gave his name to his son, the present distinguished Commodore Wadsworth of the American navy.

Col. John Brooks, recently governor of Massachusetts, was the second who gave his name to his son ; the late Col. Brooks of the U. S. Army, distinguished for his gallant conduct, as an artillery officer at Plattsburg, and on several other occasions ; Col. Henry Dearborn of the Revolution, more recently Secretary of War and foreign Minister, was the third who honored his name in this way.

This son is still alive, been Collector of the port of Boston, member of Congress, and adjutant general of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. These three lads, now passed the meridian of life, have not diminished the fame of the noble patriot whose name they bear. From the few materials, either written or traditionary, to which reference could be had, this imperfect sketch has been drawn. Although far from being full or satisfactory, it may be the means of preserving some memorial of the best of men, and one of the first, if not the very first and most accomplished officer of the revolution. Should our country ever again be involved in the evils of war, may those evils be diminished by its being conducted by such men as ALEXANDER SCAMMELL.

## GENERAL HENRY DEARBORN.



GENERAL DEARBORN's ancestors were among the first settlers of New Hampshire; for we find, as early as 1639, Godfrey Dearborn, his direct ancestor, with other emigrants from Exeter, Devonshire, England, arrived at Squamscut Falls, now Exeter, New Hampshire, and joined the settlers at that place under the far-famed and much injured clergyman, John Wheelwright, brother of the celebrated Ann Hutchinson, who had been expelled the Province of Massachusetts on account of the Antinomian controversy.

The settlers, judging themselves without the jurisdiction of Massachusetts, on the fourth day of May, 1639, combined into a separate body politic, and articles of agreement were signed by thirty-five freemen, one of whom was Godfrey Dearborn. All laws were made in a popular assembly. Treason and rebellion against the King, (who is styled the Lord's anointed,) or the country, were made capital crimes. This combination continued three years.

Godfrey Dearborn soon after removed from Exeter to Winnicomet, now the town of Hampton, situated be-



tween Newberry, Massachusetts, and Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in the latter State, ten miles from his former residence ; where he purchased a large tract of land. A principal inducement with Mr. Dearborn and others for settling at Hampton, was the extensive salt marsh, which was extremely valuable, as the uplands were not cultivated so as to produce a sufficiency of hay for the support of the cattle.

Henry, the son of Godfrey, who was a "man grown" on his father's first arrival at Exeter, inherited the estate, which descended to his son John. Simon, the son of John, resided on the same place, had twelve children, the youngest of whom was Henry, born at Hampton on the 23d of February, 1751, and is the subject of this sketch.

Young Dearborn, after receiving that education which the best schools in New England afforded, commenced and finished his medical education under the instruction of Doctor Hall Jackson, of Portsmouth, who was a distinguished surgeon in the army of the revolution, and justly celebrated as one of the most able physicians New England has produced. Dr. Dearborn was settled in the practice of physic at Nottingham-square, in New Hampshire, three years previous to the commencement of the revolutionary war, where, with several gentlemen of the neighborhood, he employed his leisure hours in military exercises ; being convinced that the time was rapidly approaching when the liberties of this country must be either shamefully surrendered, or boldly defended at the point of the sword. This band of associates were deter-

mined to be prepared and equipped themselves for the last resort of freemen.

On the morning of the 20th of April, 1775, notice by an express was received of the affair of the preceding day at Lexington. He, with about sixty of the inhabitants of the town, assembled, and made a rapid movement for Cambridge, where they arrived the next morning at sunrise, having marched a distance of fifty-five miles in less than twenty-four hours. After remaining several days, and there being no immediate occasion for their services, they returned.

It being determined that a number of regiments should be immediately raised for the common defence, Dr. Dearborn was appointed a captain in the first New Hampshire regiment, under the command of Colonel John Stark. Such was his popularity, and the confidence of the public in his bravery and conduct, that in ten days from the time he received his commission, he enlisted a full company, and joined the regiment at Medford, in the vicinity of Boston, on the 15th of May. Previous to the battle of Bunker Hill, he was engaged in a skirmish on Hog-Island, whither he had been sent to prevent the cattle and other stock from being carried off by the British ; and soon after, took part in an action with an armed vessel near Winnisimit ferry.

On the morning of the glorious *seventeenth of June*, information was received that the British were preparing to come out from Boston, and storm the works which had been thrown up on Breed's Hill the night before, by the Americans. The regiment to which he was attached

was immediately paraded and marched from Medford, about four miles, to the scene of the anticipated attack. When it reached Charlestown Neck, two regiments were halted in consequence of a heavy enfilading fire thrown across it, of round, bar, and chain-shot, from the Lively frigate, and floating batteries anchored in Charles river, and a floating battery lying in the river Mystic. Major McClary went forward and observed to the commanders, if they did not intend to move on, he wished them to open and let Stark's regiment pass. The latter was immediately done.

Captain Dearborn's company being in front, he marched by the side of Col. Stark, who, moving with a very deliberate pace, Dearborn suggested to him the propriety of quickening the march of the regiment, that it might sooner be relieved from the galling cross-fire of the enemy. With a look peculiar to himself, he fixed his eyes on Dearborn, and observed with perfect composure, "Dearborn, one fresh man in action is worth ten fatigued ones!" and continued to advance in the same cool and collected manner.

When the regiment arrived at Bunker Hill, the enemy were landing on the shore opposite Copp's Hill. At this moment the veteran and gallant Stark harangued his regiment in a short but animated address; then directed them to give three cheers, and make a rapid movement to the rail fence which ran from the left, and in the rear of the redoubt toward the Mystic river.

The redoubt was erected and commanded by the gallant Colonel Prescott. The action soon commenced,

and the Americans stood their ground until their ammunition was expended. Captain Dearborn was posted on the right of the regiment, which gave him a full and fair view of the whole action, and being armed with a fuzee, fired regularly with his men. After our troops retreated from the battle-ground and over the Neck, an occurrence took place which affected the whole army, and especially Captain Dearborn ; therefore, it will be given in his own words :

“ From the ships of war and a large battery on Copp’s Hill in Boston, a heavy cannonade was kept up upon our line and redoubt, from the commencement to the close of the action and during the retreat ; but with little effect, except killing the brave Major Andrew McClary of Col. Stark’s regiment, soon after we retreated from Bunker’s Hill.

“ He was among the first officers of the army—possessing a sound judgment, of undaunted bravery, enterprising, ardent and zealous, both as a patriot and soldier. His loss was severely felt by his compatriots in arms, while his country was deprived of the services of one of her most distinguished and promising champions of liberty.

“ After leaving the field of battle I met him and drank some spirit and water with him. He was animated and sanguine in the result of the conflict for independence, from the glorious display of valor which had distinguished his countrymen on that memorable day. He soon observed that the British troops on Bunker’s Hill appeared in motion, and said he would go and reconnoitre them,

to see whether they were coming out over the Neck ; at the same time directing me to march my company down the road toward Charlestown. We were then at Tuft's house near Ploughed Hill. I immediately made a forward movement to the position he directed me to take, and halted while he proceeded to the Old Pound, which stood on the site now occupied as a tavern house, not far from the entrance to the Neck.

"After he had satisfied himself that the enemy did not intend to leave their strong posts on the heights, he was returning toward me, and within twelve or fifteen rods of where I stood with my company, a random shot, from one of the frigates lying near where the centre of Craigie's bridge now is, passed directly through his body, and put to flight one of the most heroic souls that ever animated man. He leaped two or three feet from the ground, pitched forward, and fell dead upon his face. I had him carried to Medford, where he was interred, with all the respect and honors we could exhibit to the manes of a great man. He was my bosom friend ; we had grown up together on terms of the greatest intimacy, and I loved him as a brother."

The New Hampshire line retired toward Winter Hill, and the others on to Prospect Hill. Strong advanced picquets were posted on the roads leading to Charlestown, and the troops, anticipating an attack, rested on their arms.

Few events of moment took place in the army from this day till September, and none in which Captain Dearborn took part. In September he volunteered his



services to join the expedition of Arnold up the Kennebec river, and through the wilderness to Quebec. He was permitted to select a company from the New Hampshire regiment for this arduous service.

Thirty-two days were employed in traversing the hideous wilderness, between the settlements on the Kennebec and Chaudiere river, during the inclement months of November and December, in which every hardship and fatigue of which human nature is capable, was endured indiscriminately by the officers and troops, and a considerable portion of them starved to death.

On the highlands between the Kennebec and St. Lawrence, the remnant of provisions was divided among the companies, who were directed to make the best of their way in separate divisions to the settlements of the Chaudiere.

The last fragment of food in most of the companies was soon consumed, and Dearborn was reduced to the extremity of dividing his *favorite dog* among his suffering men. When he reached the Chaudiere, from colds, extreme hardships and want of sustenance, his strength failed him, and he was unable to walk but a short distance without wading into the water to invigorate and stimulate his limbs.

With great difficulty he reached a poor hut on the Chaudiere, when he told his men he could accompany them no further, and animated them forward to a glorious discharge of their duty. His company left him with tears in their eyes, expecting to see him no more. Dearborn was here seized with a violent fever, during which

his life was despaired of for ten days ; without medicine, and with scarcely the common necessities of life.

His strong constitution at last surmounted the disease, and as soon as he was able to travel he proceeded to Point Levy in a sleigh, crossed over to Wolf's Cove, and made his unexpected appearance at the head of his company, a few days before the assault on Quebec. At four o'clock in the morning, on the 31st day of December, 1775, in a severe snow storm, in a climate that vies with Norway in tempests and intense cold, the attack was commenced. Captain Dearborn was attached to the corps under Arnold, who was wounded early in the action, and carried from the field. Lieutenant Colonel Green, the after hero of Mud Island and conqueror of Count Donop, succeeded in the command. They stormed the first barrier and entered the lower town. Montgomery had already bled on immortal ground, and his division having made a precipitate and most shameful retreat as soon as the General fell, the corps under Green was exposed to a sanguinary but unavailing contest.

From the windows of houses, which being constructed of stone, each was a castle, and from the tops of the parapets a destructive fire was poured upon the assailants, which threatened inevitable destruction to every one who should appear in the streets. The American troops maintained this desperate contest until at last they were reduced to the necessity of surrendering in small parties. The whole corps led on by Arnold, were killed or made prisoners of war. The officers were put in rigid confinement, and every day were tauntingly told that in the

spring they would be sent to England and hanged as rebels. In May, 1776, Major Meigs, a virtuous citizen and gallant officer, and Captain Dearborn were permitted to return on parole. They were sent round to Halifax in the frigate *Niger*, and treated with the usual contumely and hauteur of English officers.

On their arrival at Halifax they were put on board another ship of war, and the commander instructed by General Howe to land them in some part of New England. After the ship had cruised with them on board for upward of thirty days, during which period they met with the grossest insults, they were put on shore in Penobscot Bay, from whence they proceeded by land to Portland.

In the fore part of March, 1777, Dearborn was exchanged, and appointed Major to the third New Hampshire regiment, commanded by Alexander Scammell, and early in May following arrived with the regiment at Ticonderoga. Washington, in his letters to Congress, was urgent to effect the exchange of Meigs, Dearborn and Morgan—all of them, at that time, distinguished for their bravery and sufferings, and afterwards, in higher grades, for their capacity and intrepidity. Washington was rarely mistaken in his estimate of character, in civil or military life.

On the 16th of July, the post at Ticonderoga was abandoned on the approach of Gen. Burgoyne's army. Gen. St. Clair retreated with the main body of the troops, by land, through Vermont to Hudson river, near Saratoga, and soon after continued the retreat until the army had crossed the Mohawk river, near its junction with

the Hudson, where considerable reinforcements were met, and Gen. Gates assumed the command of the Northern army.

St. Clair, in this disastrous retreat, sent forward Major Dearborn to Gen. Schuyler, for the purpose of facilitating his retreat with the least possible loss, and to effect a junction with Schuyler in the best possible manner. Soon after the capture of the British detachment under Col. Baum, at Bennington, by Gen. Stark, the second in command at Bunker Hill, and who met the weight of the battle at Trenton ; and the retreat of Gen. St. Ledger from Fort Stanwix ; Gen. Gates advanced to meet the enemy, who was encamped near Saratoga.

When the army arrived at Stillwater, a corps of light infantry was formed, by detachments from the line, consisting of five full companies, and the command given to Major Dearborn ; and in the opinion of the army, and the Adjutant General in particular, " a more vigilant and determined soldier never wore a sword." Dearborn had orders to act in concert with Col. Morgan's regiment of riflemen, which had joined the army a few days before. A strong position was selected, called Bemis' Height, and immediately occupied by the American army.

The riflemen, and Dearborn's corps of light infantry encamped in advance of the left of the main line. The British army had advanced from Saratoga, and encamped on the bank of the river, within three miles of Gen. Gates' position.

On the morning of the 19th of September, the advanced piquets announced that the right wing of the British



army was in motion, when Morgan and Dearborn, who commanded separate corps, received orders from General Arnold to make a forward movement, and check the approaching column.

These orders were promptly obeyed, and the British advanced guard, consisting of Tories and other irregulars, was soon met and attacked with spirit, in which conflict they killed and wounded a considerable number of the enemy, and made twenty-two prisoners. This charge was led (as General Morgan Lewis, who saw it from more elevated ground, informed the writer within a few years,) by Major Dearborn, "in the most gallant and determined manner."

The action soon became general, and continued until the dusk of the evening, on the same ground on which it commenced; neither party having retreated more than twenty or thirty rods, and that alternately, so that the dead of both armies were mingled together. Dearborn with his light troops, covered the left of the main line, while Morgan covered the right. The loss was severe on both sides, and especially in the New Hampshire line. Lieutenant Colonels Adams and Colburn being killed, Dearborn was promoted to a lieutenant Colonelcy. As his light corps was constantly employed in reconnoitering, frequent actions occurred between the picquets and advanced parties of the enemy.

On the seventh day of October, General Burgoyne having determined to make an extraordinary and last effort to gain possession of the American position, and to open a passage for his army to Albany, where he expected



ted to join the British forces then ascending the Hudson river; at about one o'clock in the afternoon, advanced in force with a fine train of artillery, and after driving in the American picquets, appeared in full view on the left of General Gates' line, in open ground. Morgan and Dearborn were ordered by General Arnold in person, to advance, and hold the enemy in check. They advanced rapidly, and in a few minutes were engaged with the enemy, but soon after received orders to move in such a direction as to meet and oppose any body of the enemy that might be advancing to occupy an eminence which would give him the command of the left wing of the American army. In this movement a body of the British light infantry, about five hundred strong, under the command of Lord Belcaras, was met, and instantly broke and dispersed by one fire and a gallant charge of the infantry. In the language of the American adjutant general, Dearborn, at the moment when the enemy's light infantry were attempting to change front, pressed forward with ardor and delivered a close fire; leaped a fence, shouted, and gallantly forced them to retire in disorder. Earl Belcaras re-formed behind a fence, but being now attacked by Dearborn, Morgan, and the brigade of Poor, the whole British line, commanded by Burgoyne in person, gave way and retired to his camp. The riflemen and light infantry continued their pursuit until they arrived in the rear of the enemy's right wing.

Morgan's troops now passed through the skirts of a wood, which brought him in the rear of the enemy's left

wing, while Dearborn bore down directly on the rear of the right wing, where the British artillery was principally posted, under cover of a body of German troops. Dearborn advanced rapidly up to the pieces, and when within about thirty yards, threw in such a tremendous and well-directed fire, as killed and dispersed the whole of the covering party, as well as nearly all the artillerymen.

The artillery was immediately taken, together with Major Williams, the commander, and several other officers; also Sir Francis Clark, one of General Burgoyne's aids-de-camp, who was mortally wounded. He had just given orders for the removal of the cannon, and as he wheeled his horse to return, received the fire from Dearborn's corps. Colonel Dearborn sent the cannon and prisoners round the right of the British army to the American camp, then advanced in line within sixty yards of the enemy's rear, and poured in a full fire from his whole corps, which produced such an effect as compelled the enemy to abandon the field, with great precipitation and disorder, and retire to their advanced fortified camp. In this retreat General Frazer was killed.

The Americans immediately advanced upon the British, and while Arnold with Dearborn's corps and several regiments of infantry assaulted and carried the German fortified camp on the right, General Poor, with the New Hampshire line, attacked what was called *Frazer's camp*, which the enemy abandoned as soon as the German camp was carried. It was then nearly

dark. On the assault on the German camp, Arnold, who leaped his horse over the ramparts, received a severe wound in his leg, and his horse being killed at the same moment, fell on him.

While Colonel Dearborn, who ran to him as soon as he fell, was assisting him from under his horse, he asked the General if he was badly wounded ; he replied with great warmth, " Yes ; in the same leg which was wounded at Quebec ; I can never go into action without being shot ; I wish the ball had gone through my heart."

After taking care of the wounded, artillery-wagons, horses, tents, and baggage, the prisoners were sent to the American head-quarters, and the troops that had assaulted and carried the post, being relieved by others, at about twelve o'clock at night, marched into camp very much fatigued.

Early next morning, Dearborn's corps, with about one thousand infantry, advanced over the field of battle into the rear of the enemy's main position, to prevent any attempt of Burgoyne's to retreat into Canada ; but as he did not move, this detachment returned to camp at dark. The next morning, it being ascertained that the enemy were retreating, Dearborn was ordered to advance with his corps and a part of Morgan's regiment, and take possession of the British camp, with the sick and wounded, that had been left to the care of General Gates.

The whole of the American army was soon after ordered to march ; but an unusually heavy rain prevented this movement, and compelled General Burgoyne to

halt, and encamp not more than eight miles from his former position. The rain continued without intermission until past the middle of the night. On the 10th of October, the American army marched in pursuit of General Burgoyne, with the light troops in front, and on the 19th the British army surrendered.

General Gates, in his official report of the battles at Saratoga, mentioned in a particular manner the bravery and good conduct of Colonels Morgan and Dearborn. A few days after the capitulation, Dearborn's light infantry was broken up, and the officers and men restored to their respective regiments. In the actions previous to the surrender of Burgoyne, the New Hampshire line under Poor acted a conspicuous part, and lost in action more in killed and wounded than any other corps of equal numbers; three Lt. Colonels, Adams, Colburn and Conner, killed, and Colonel Scammell wounded. This brigade was composed of three regiments, commanded by Colonels Scammell, Reid and Cilley, all veteran and distinguished officers. Yet, as it may with some reason be supposed, too much credit is awarded it, it is proper to state that previous to the 19th of September, Van Cortland's and Livingston's New York regiments, at their own request, had been attached to Poor's Brigade; and when they marched to join Washington in the vicinity of Philadelphia, Colonel Hamilton, who directed the march of the northern army to Pennsylvania, by the special direction of Washington, says these regiments did not wish to be separated from the Brigade or the Brigade from them; they therefore marched under the



order of Poor, and hutted with him the ensuing winter at White Marsh ; and it is believed, fought with him at Monmouth the next summer. The State of New York had no General officer in the field in the actions against Burgoyne's army. General Schuyler had been withdrawn from the command of the northern army, after the success of Stark at Bennington, and the relief of Fort Stanwix by Arnold, under his auspices, through the ill founded prejudices of a part of New York and a greater part of New England, though in every respect a superior man and abler officer than Gates.

Generals George and James Clinton were below on the Hudson, in command of Forts Montgomery and Clinton, which they would have been able to have defended successfully and triumphantly against Sir Henry Clinton, had they not been controlled and thwarted by an incompetent General placed over them by Congress. The origin of the prejudice against Schuyler and St. Clair, was the abandonment by the latter General of Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, within the limits of Schuyler's command. The ridiculous story that both these Generals were traitors, at the time gained credit. "They were paid for their treason by the enemy's *silver balls*, shot from Burgoyne's guns into our camp, which were collected by St. Clair and divided between him and Schuyler." These officers at that time and ever after, in the opinion of Dearborn, were honest patriots and able generals. After being suspended from command for more than a year, with this odium upon them, they were brought before a



Court Martial, of which General Lincoln was President, and "acquitted unanimously with the highest honor on every charge."

The grand object, the capitulation of Burgoyne, being obtained, the New Hampshire Brigade performed a march of forty miles, and forded the Mohawk river below the falls, in fourteen hours. The design of this rapid movement was to check the progress of a detachment of the British, commanded by Sir Henry Clinton, who threatened Albany with the same destruction which he had spread below ; but on hearing the fate of Burgoyne, he returned quietly to New York. When the badness of the roads at that time are taken into consideration, together with the fording a considerable river, with the usual amount of artillery and baggage-wagons, this march has never been exceeded, if equalled, in this country. But when the character of General Poor, and his subordinate officers, Scammel, Cilley, Reid, Dearborn, Van Cortland and Livingston, are taken into view, and the confidence such officers would inspire in troops, all the difficulties of such a march at once disappear. In the campaign of 1778, Lt. Col. Dearborn was attached to Cilley's regiment ; and in that capacity was closely engaged with the enemy at Monmouth in June of that year. Among other measures which Washington took to check the advance of the British, he ordered Cilley's regiment to attack a body of troops which were passing through an orchard on the right wing of the enemy. The regiment advanced under a heavy fire, with rapid step and shouldered arms. The enemy fled

off and formed on the end of a morass. The Americans wheeled to the right, received their second fire with shouldered arms, marched up within eight rods, dressed, and gave a full fire, and charged bayonet. The British, having sustained considerable loss, fled with precipitation across the morass, where they were protected by the main body of the enemy. Col. Dearborn was then dispatched to the Commander-in-Chief, to ask what further service was required : when he approached, Washington inquired, with evident pleasure at their gallant conduct, "What troops are those?" "Full-blooded Yankees from New Hampshire, sir," replied Dearborn. Washington expressed his approbation in explicit terms, and directed that they should fall back and refresh themselves, as the heat was oppressive and the troops much fatigued. In the general orders of the next day, Washington bestowed the highest commendation on the brilliant exploit of the regiment. Colonels Wigglesworth and Brookes of the Massachusetts line, the latter of whom that day acted as Adjutant General to Lee's division, have often, in expressing their opinion of the conduct of this regiment, declared that their gallant and firm conduct was the salvation of the army, for at the moment every thing was retreat or confusion.

In the campaign of 1779, Colonel Dearborn accompanied General Sullivan's expedition against the Indians in the interior of New York, and had an active share in the action of the 29th of August, with the united forces of Tories and Indians, at Newtown. In 1780, he was with the main army in New Jersey. This year the New

Hampshire line lost by death their esteemed and respected General Enoch Poor. He died of a fever, September 9th. His funeral was the most magnificent and solemn which took place during the war. His corpse was brought from Paramus to the vicinity of the burying ground near Hackensack, when it was attended to the place of interment by a procession of a regiment of light infantry with arms reversed; four field pieces; Major Lee's regiment of light horse; General Hand and his brigade; two chaplains; the horse of the deceased, with his boots and spurs suspended from the saddle, led by a servant; the corpse, borne by four sergeants, and the pall supported by six general officers. On the coffin, a pair of pistols and two swords crossing each other. The corpse was followed by the officers of the New Hampshire brigade, and the officers of the brigade of light infantry, which the deceased had lately commanded. The officers of the army fell in promiscuously, the whole closed by his Excellency General Washington and Marquis La Fayette. Having arrived at the burying yard, the troops opened to the right and left, resting on their arms reversed, and the procession passed to the grave, when a eulogy was delivered by the Reverend Mr. Evans. A band of music, played a funeral dirge. The military being in complete uniform and well disciplined, exhibited a martial and noble appearance. No scene can exceed in grandeur and solemnity, a military funeral. General Poor was a true patriot, who took an early part in the cause of his country, and during his military career, was respected for his talents and bra-

very, and beloved for the amiable qualities of his heart. But it is a sufficient eulogy to say, that he enjoyed the confidence and esteem of Washington. The New Hampshire line mourned his death as of a father, and must have been gratified by the respect shown his memory. General Poor and Colonel Dearborn married sisters.

In 1781, he was appointed deputy quarter-master-general, with the rank of colonel, and served with Washington's army in that capacity in Virginia. He was at the siege of Yorktown by the combined armies of America and France, and the capture of Lord Cornwallis and his army. At this siege, Colonel Scammel being killed in reconnoitering the enemy's position at the head of the light troops, Colonel Dearborn succeeded to the command of the first New Hampshire regiment.

In 1782, the New Hampshire line having been reduced to two regiments, were commanded by Colonels George Reid and Henry Dearborn. The former was stationed on the Mohawk, and the latter at Saratoga. In November, Dearborn joined the main army at Newburgh, and remained with it till the peace of 1783.

Having mentioned the names of George Reid and Henry Dearborn together, it may be noticed that they were born in the same county in New Hampshire, were both captains in Stark's regiment at Breed's Hill, and were the only two of thirteen captains in the regiment that day, who continued in the army to the close of the war, and promoted to the rank of colonel.



Reid was considerably the older man and now the senior colonel, having been promoted to a majority while Dearborn was a prisoner at Quebec. If Reid's early education and associations were less favorable than Dearborn's, as a military man he was always respected, and as a citizen virtuous and upright, and was long a general in the militia of New Hampshire, and sheriff of the most populous county in that state.

"While attending court at Exeter," as he said himself, "a carriage, on passing, let down a window, and a voice exclaimed, 'Halloo, George !' I looked up, and replied, 'Harry, is that you ?' We went to the hotel together, drank our punch, and had a grand time. I had not seen him for twenty-five years." A gentleman present observed, "General Reid, how could you get along with such a democrat as General Dearborn is ?" Reid, after a moment's pause, replied, "I always was rather sorry Harry was a democrat, but that is of no consequence among old officers ; he is a noble fellow ; there is no man I esteem and love more ; and if Jefferson had always made as good appointments as Dearborn, to the war office, I should think much better of him than I now do."

After Independence was secured, and acknowledged by Great Britain, Colonel Dearborn, with his companions in arms who had survived the fatigues, hardships, and dangers of the war, returned to the pursuits of private life ; and he could truly say, as to property, "I went out full and returned empty."



We have seen Colonel Dearborn in more than eight years of war, in sickness and in health, in imprisonment, in victory and defeat, from Bunker's Hill to the surrender of Cornwallis, the same ardent patriot and determined soldier. In camp, vigilant, circumspect and intelligent; in action determined, and always pressing into close action with the bayonet, as at Saratoga and at Monmouth. In camp or action, always receiving the approbation of his commanders, whether Sullivan, Gates, or Washington.

All comparisons may be considered in some measure invidious, yet justice requires, and truth warrants the assertion, that of all the officers of the gallant New Hampshire line in the revolutionary war, after the deaths of General Poor and Colonel Scammel, Dearborn stood first. The writer is fully aware that Stark, Cilley and Reid, were all officers of great merit, but he feels compelled to make the foregoing declaration in favor of Col. Dearborn.

In June, 1784, he removed from New Hampshire to the Kennebec river, in Maine. Before his removal, he fortunately exchanged some uncultivated land with the trustees of Philips's Exeter Academy for cash, a commodity at that time rarely to be had. Whether the trustees were losers or gainers by the exchange, is not known; but Col. Dearborn always considered it a fortunate occurrence, and in the light of a favor to him.

In 1787, he was elected by the field-officers of several regiments a brigadier-general of the militia, and soon

after appointed major-general by the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

President Washington never forgot his distinguished compatriots in arms, and when called by the voice of the nation to the head of the Federal Government, he nominated his most deserving officers to offices of trust and responsibility ; among these General Dearborn was appointed Marshal of the District of Maine. Soon after he was elected a member of Congress from the Kennebec district, and re-elected ; and in that body took a decided stand in the House of Representatives against the British or Jay's Treaty, as it was commonly called.

In this act we see his independence ; for he well knew that he acted contrary to the opinion and wishes of Washington. Washington believed the treaty to be preferred, at that time, to war with Great Britain. Dearborn believed, and honestly believed, the treaty to be derogatory to the honor of the American people and Government, and preferred war to peace on such conditions. A very great majority of the American people were then opposed to the treaty, but Washington and the requisite majority of the senate, twenty to ten, approved of it.

At this time the people look back with approbation of Washington and the senate in this affair. Many honest and able patriots thought and acted with General Dearborn, relative to the exciting question of Jay's Treaty. In consequence of his vote on this occasion, notwithstanding his revolutionary services and great personal popularity, he lost his election in the Kennebec district, and remained a few years in retirement.

In 1801, the administration of the Government passed from the federal to the democratic party after a long and bitter contest, when General Dearborn was called by President Jefferson to preside over the War Department. The federal party not only opposed Mr. Jefferson for the political course he had taken against the administration of Washington, but for the personal attacks he had made on that great and good man, and all the persons he had confided in during his administration—John Adams, John Jay, Timothy Pickering and Alexander Hamilton, all his cotemporaries. If these great and honest patriots were mistaken in any of their measures, they did not deserve the personal animadversions of Mr. Jefferson; but Mr. Jefferson, in part to make amends for these errors, called into his cabinet the first men of his party for talents and integrity, such as Madison, Galatin, and Dearborn. There was no defalcations among the public officers during the eight years of his administering the government.

When General Dearborn was about to resign, the War Department was examined by James Hillhouse and Timothy Pickering, and every thing found correct; and so they reported, although his political opponents. His integrity in the cabinet was as unimpeached as his courage and capacity had been conspicuous in the field. On resigning the War Department he was appointed Collector of the Port of Boston and Charlestown, the successor of General Lincoln, who had held the office under Washington, Adams and Jefferson; in which office he remained until the nation, deeply wounded and dishonored by re-

peated violations of its rights, resorted to arms to obtain redress. After thirty years of prosperous peace, the Government had to select its officers to command its armies among its citizens. Could a more eligible appointment have been made for commander-in-chief, than from the few existing veterans whose talents had been proved in the tented field and on the day of battle? Among this small number was General Dearborn. During the month of January, 1812, he received the following letter from the President of the United States :

*“ Washington, January 11, 1812.*

“ DEAR SIR,

The Congress has just passed an act, adding twenty odd thousand to the military establishment. It provides for two major-generals and five brigadiers. The importance of placing this, and the forces in view, under the best commanders, speaks for itself. Our eyes could not but be turned, on such an occasion, to your qualifications and experience ; and I wait for your permission only to name you to the senate for the *senior* major-general.

“I hope you will so far suspend all other considerations as not to withhold it, and that I shall not only be gratified with this information as quickly as possible, but with an authority to look for your arrival here as soon as you can make it practicable. You will be sensible of all the value of your co-operation on the spot, in making the arrangements necessary to repair the loss of time which has taken place. All the information we receive



urges a vigorous preparation for events. Accept my best respects and most friendly wishes.

“JAMES MADISON.”

On the receipt of this communication, General Dearborn, believing that the accumulated injuries which his country had received from Great Britain, and which still remained unredressed, required an appeal to the God of battles, informed the president that his life had ever been devoted to the service of his country, and he felt himself bound to obey her commands whenever his services were required.

Early in February, he received a letter from the President, dated January 28, in which he observes : “I have just received from the senate their concurrence (23 to 9) in your nomination as a major-general. I give you the earliest notice, that, without waiting for a formal communication, you may hasten your setting out for Washington. In order to afford the public the benefit of your councils here, it is very important that you be here without a moment’s delay. In the hope of seeing you very speedily, and with every wish for your happiness, I tender assurances of my esteem and friendship.” The next day after the receipt of the foregoing communication—ever prompt to obey the commands of his country—he left Boston for the city of Washington, where he remained until the last of April, assisting in making those arrangements which were deemed necessary on the anticipated event of a declaration of war.



He then repaired to Albany and directed the establishment of barracks, depots of arms, provisions, and the whole *material* of war, on the northern and northwestern frontier. From thence he proceeded to Boston, and adopted the necessary arrangements for putting the garrisons and sea-coasts of Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts proper, New Hampshire and the district of Maine, in the best possible posture of defence.

From the above communications of President Madison, after serving eight years with General Dearborn in the cabinet, and a previous acquaintance as members of Congress, appears the entire confidence he placed in him for his integrity and ability in the necessary arrangement of the army previous to the declaration of war; and this, too, when the late Gov. Eustis was secretary of war—a gentleman who had passed the whole of the revolutionary war, with high reputation, in the staff of the army. It will be seen, hereafter, that William Eustis was a very different person from John Armstrong. Soon after the declaration of war, General Dearborn repaired to Greenbush, to direct and superintend the operations of the opening campaign. The shameful surrender of Hull, at Detroit, and subsequent unfortunate transactions on the Niagara, at Queenstown Heights, frustrated the plans of the campaign of 1812.

Notwithstanding these severe checks, Gen. Dearborn did not relax in activity; for as soon as the troops went into winter quarters, he was unremittingly employed in recruiting the army, and making preparations for opening the campaign early the following year. His expeditious

movements in 1813, with the regular army, preserved Sackett's Harbor, when abandoned by the militia, and secured the fleet, then frozen up at that port, from a contemplated attack of the enemy. Previous to the General's departure from Albany, in February, 1813, he had ordered Generals Lewis and Boyd to the Niagara frontier, directing the former to prepare boats and scows, erect batteries, and make every necessary arrangement for an attack on Fort George.

After giving these orders, he repaired to Utica and Whitestown, made there arrangements for the transportation of troops down the Oswego to Sackett's Harbor, agreeably to a plan of operations which had been submitted to the secretary of war, and which was left to the general to carry into effect. The projected plan was to capture Little York, which would give Commodore Chauncey the command of the lake, render it impossible for the enemy to furnish their troops and Indians with stores, and cut off all communication between Kingston and Malden.

The plan was disclosed at the Harbor only to Commodore Chauncey and General Pike. General Lewis, then at Niagara, was advised of the movement, and ordered to be in readiness for an immediate attack on Fort George. After the capture of York, the troops were to be transported to Niagara, and make an instant attack on Fort George. This being effected, the army was to have been transported back to Sackett's Harbor; from whence, with additional troops collecting by previous orders, they were to make an attack on Kingston in its rear; while

the fleet would batter the town, fortifications, and fleet in front. With this system of operations in view, General Dearborn sailed with sixteen hundred men, as soon as the ice permitted the fleet to leave the Harbor.

York was taken the 27th day of April, with all the stores of the British army, a ship of thirty guns burnt, and the Duke of Gloucester, of fourteen guns, made a prize. The Earl of Moira had previously sailed for Kingston.

To show the great confidence the army had in their commander and his plans, an extract of a letter from the able and lamented General Z. M. Pike, who fell at the capture of Little York, to his wife, is here inserted :

“MY DEAR CLARA.—We are now standing on and off the harbor of York, which we shall attack at daylight in the morning. I shall dedicate the last moments to you, and to-morrow throw all other ideas but my country to the winds. As yet, I know not if Gen. Dearborn lands: he has acted honorably, and I feel great gratitude to him. My pen and sword shall both be exerted to do him honor.”

Upon the success of the first part of the expedition, General Dearborn sent an express to inform Gen. Lewis what he had done, and to notify him of his intended arrival with the army at Fort Niagara, at which post the General arrived a few days after, where he learned that General Lewis was at Judge Potter's, opposite Niagara Falls, fourteen miles from his troops. Upon further inquiry, to the disappointment and mortification of General Dearborn, he discovered the heavy mortars were not fixed

on their beds in the fort, nor the battering cannon mounted, nor the boats to make the descent provided ; and General Winder with his brigade was at Black Rock, more than thirty miles distant from the mouth of the Niagara, where the descent on the Canadian shore was to be made.

Gen. Dearborn, who had long known Gen. Lewis, was personally attached to him, and therefore unwilling in the present instance to expose his want of activity to the government, by assigning his gross negligence of prescribed duties and of the positive instructions which had been given, as the cause of the postponement of the intended attack ; but, a few days after, fearful it was possible improper advantage might be taken, to his prejudice, of this magnanimous forbearance, in the event of disasters, (which ultimately was done) he apprized the secretary of war of all the circumstances which had occasioned the unlooked for delay in the movement of the army.

The general, thus circumstanced, knowing the enemy would be reinforced before the boats to be built would be in readiness to pass over the river, desired Commodore Chauncey to return to Sackett's Harbor, and in the interim bring up General Chandler's brigade. During this period, five batteries were erected above Fort Niagara, and the boats which had been commenced were ordered to be finished with all expedition, and brought round to Four Mile Creek ; the last was effected, on the river, under fire of the enemy's batteries, without any loss. Immediately on the return of the fleet with Gen.



Chandler's brigade, the general issued an order, which never has been published, "that on the next day the troops should breakfast at two o'clock, strike tents at three, and embark at four."

The situation and position of the country had been previously obtained by spies, the plan of landing digested, and the plan of attack delineated, which was submitted to Generals Lewis, Chandler, Winder and Boyd, and met their full approbation. Excessive fatigue, and frequent exposures to storms, had produced a violent fever, which, ten days previous to the attack on Fort George, had confined General Dearborn to his bed.

The morning after the general order was announced for the attack, General Lewis called on him and said it would be impossible for the army to embark. General Dearborn, then having some *suspensions* of the military character and *energy* of Gen. Lewis, replied, the attack should be made as ordered, that he was prepared, and further delay would not be allowed. On the morning of the attack General Dearborn was mounted on his horse, by assistance, before four o'clock, in opposition to the opinion of his physicians, and against the remonstrances of the officers of his staff. He rode to the place of embarkation—saw the troops on board the fleet and boats; General Lewis, who had the immediate command, now *first made his appearance*, and expressed his great astonishment at the unexpected rapidity with which this movement had been made. This effort had so exhausted Gen. Dearborn, that he was taken from his horse, led to a boat, and conveyed on board the Madison. On his



way to Four-mile Creek, Dr. Mann, a hospital surgeon of the army, meeting Gen. Dearborn, said to him, "I apprehend you do not intend to embark with the army." The general replied, "*I apprehend nothing sir—I go into battle or perish in the attempt.*" From the first dawn of day, and while the army was embarking, a most tremendous fire of hot shot and shells from Fort Niagara and the newly erected batteries, was opened on Fort George, and continued until the block-houses, barracks and stores were enwrapped in flames, and the guns silenced.

The gallant Colonel (now General) Scott, with a command of eight hundred light troops, composed the advance of the army, followed by Generals Boyd and Win-der, and the reserve under Gen. Chandler. Col. Scott immediately made good his landing, under a sheet of fire, while the several regiments in succession formed the order of battle from right to left, in a most soldier-like manner. This landing of the army and escalade of a bank twenty feet high, similar to a parapet, has been considered the handsomest military display on the northern frontier during the war.

General Dearborn, from his great exertions, added to his state of health, was unable to support himself more than fifteen or twenty minutes on his feet at once; but he was frequently up, watching their movements. The troops had all landed, (except the reserve) when Gen. Lewis still remained on board. General Dearborn, exercising his usual delicacy with him, merely suggested to him, whether he ought not to land, and then retired.

Within twenty minutes, General Dearborn again came on deck, and finding Gen. Lewis still on board, repeated his suggestions for him to land; notwithstanding which, *Gen. Lewis was not on shore until after the battle.* The enemy had now fallen back between the village of Newark and Fort George. After Gen. Lewis had landed, an hour and a half passed away, and four thousand men formed in order of battle, with a fine train of artillery, were seen standing still; while the enemy, not more than twelve hundred, was manœuvering for a retreat. At this moment Gen. Dearborn, in agony at the delay, sent his D. A., Gen. Beebe, to Gen. Lewis, with orders "to move instantly, surround the enemy, and cut them up." Even after this order, it was an hour before Generals Boyd, Chandler and Scott, with all their arguments, could induce Gen. Lewis to advance—and then only to the south side of Newark, three-fourths of a mile from his first position, when the line was again formed, and continued until the enemy had retreated in the rear of Fort George, and took the route to Queens-town Heights. Colonel Scott, however, pursued the retreating broken army without orders three miles, and would not desist in his pursuit until four *aids-de-camp* of Gen. Lewis had been dispatched to order his return. Late in the day, the ship Madison moved up the river in front of Fort George, where Gen. Dearborn was taken on shore and carried to his quarters, much exhausted.

Meeting with Gen. Lewis, he expressed his disapprobation of his conduct, and ordered him to put the army in pursuit of the enemy at five o'clock the next morning.

Instead of which, he did not move until five o'clock in the afternoon. Upon his arrival at Queenstown Heights, he learnt the enemy had made a rapid movement towards the head of Lake Ontario, by the Beaver Dam, and sent back a report to that effect.

Gen. Dearborn having, on his part, neglected nothing to secure the advantage obtained over the enemy—mortified and provoked at the dereliction of duty in any officer, and unwilling that a broken and disconcerted army should escape, sent for Commodore Chauncey and requested him to take part of the army on board his fleet, and proceed with them to the head of the lake, while the remainder would march by the lake road, and thus make certain the capture of the enemy. To this proposition the commodore readily agreed. Orders were in consequence sent to Gen. Lewis to return. On the following morning, Chauncey called on the general, and informed him, that on reflection it would be imprudent in him to delay his return to Sackett's Harbor, as it was of the utmost importance that the new ship, Gen. Pike, should be got out on the lake with all possible despatch; while the weak state of that garrison would favor an attack from a much superior force at Kingston, (which before his return actually took place,) and destroy his new ship, and thus give Sir James Yeo the command of the lake. To the correctness of these remarks, and having no command over Com. Chauncey, Gen. Dearborn was obliged to yield. Thus frustrated in his expectation of assistance from the fleet, he ordered Generals Chandler's and Winder's brigades to follow the enemy on the lake road,

while ammunition and provisions were transported in batteaux to the head of the lake. These brigades marched, and having arrived within a few miles of the enemy's camp late in the afternoon, it was thought most *prudent* to wait and make the attack on the following morning. But the enemy, from their inferiority in numbers, thought it most *wise* to do all they could ever do before next morning : they attacked these brigades in the night, and carried off Generals Chandler and Winder prisoners. How this happened has never been satisfactorily explained ; but the captured Generals have never been accused of too much circumspection on that occasion.

The command now devolved on Col. Burns, who called a council of war : it was determined to send back to Gen. Dearborn (forty miles distant,) inform him of the event, and wait his orders. The express arrived at night. Gen. Dearborn called Generals Lewis, Boyd and Swartwout, and ordered them to set out immediately for the army, and attack the enemy. The two latter Generals were ready to start instantly ; but Gen. Lewis observed that it rained and was dark, and did not get in readiness until the next day. The day after these officers departed to join the army, the British fleet hove in sight ; approached to take the soundings opposite Fort Niagara, and appeared to be designating a place for landing troops. In consequence of which, General Dearborn recalled the army from Stoney Creek.

Com. Chauncey was confident, when he sailed from



the Niagara, he should be able to get the new ship out by the tenth of June, and that, in the mean time, the British would not dare to come out on the lake. They did appear, however, in a few days after the Commodore's departure, and thereby prevented the operations against the enemy which were contemplated. The roads were such, that it was impossible to transport provisions and supplies for the army by land; while it would have been madness to attempt it in batteaux by water, while the British fleet was on the lake. Thus situated, Gen. Dearborn determined to await the return of the Commodore, repair to Fort George, and be in readiness to move as soon as the fleet arrived. An express arrived from Commodore Chauncey, advising he could not move before the 30th of June.

At this period, Gen. Dearborn's health was reduced so low as to compel him to relinquish the immediate command of the army, and the command, *pro tem*, devolved on Gen. Boyd. A few days after, information was received that a party of British, Indians and militia, had established a post sixteen miles from Fort George, from whence were sent plundering parties in every direction, to harass and plunder those inhabitants who were friendly to the United States; and where a depot of provisions had been collected. It was of importance that this post should be broken up; and to put it beyond a doubt, that a plan to effect it should succeed, a select corps was formed of five hundred picked infantry, and a detachment of mounted volunteers, selected because they were acquainted with the country; also a detachment of light



artillery, with one twelve and one six pounder, to batter down the stone house, if it should be garrisoned for defence.

It became a question who should take the orders of this expedition, as a number of Colonels requested the command; and among others was Col. Boerstler. This officer stood in the highest repute for his talents, enterprise and bravery. To him it was assigned. After this arrangement was made, General Boyd, with Colonels Scott, Christie, and other officers, who approved the measure, waited on Gen. Dearborn, and asked his opinion, which was in accordance with theirs.

Gen. Boyd gave orders to Col. Boerstler to march at dusk, reach the object of the enterprise at sunrise, surround the house, capture the party, destroy the provisions, and return immediately to camp. The following day, June 25th, about twelve o'clock, an express arrived from Colonel Boerstler, with information that he was attacked within two or three miles of the house, had fallen back into an open field, and there would defend himself until he was reinforced. Gen. Boyd, and Colonels Scott and Christie waited on Gen. Dearborn, and stated to him these facts. Gen. Dearborn considered this such an extraordinary decision of Col. Boerstler, that upon a moment's reflection, he would either fight a decisive battle, or make a rapid retreat until he met the reinforcement; for Boerstler well knew the enemy was not half the distance from him that he was from Fort George, and could be reinforced and cut him off before it was possible to send him relief. General Boyd, however,

ordered Colonel Christie, with a detachment of three or four hundred, to march ; who, upon his arrival at Queens-town, sent back an express that information was obtained, that at one o'clock Col. Boerstler surrendered. This report was considered impossible by all. The General renewed the order to push on. A short period after, a second express arrived from Col. Christie, stating that he had further positive information, that Boerstler had surrendered ; when the reinforcing detachment was ordered to return.

General Dearborn was censured for this affair, in anonymous letters published in the National Intelligencer fabricated at Washington, or by some of the *corps d'espionage* in the army. The unvarnished fact is, that Gen. Boyd ordered five hundred and sixty selected men to destroy a post, garrisoned, as he was informed, not by more than one hundred and eighty British, Indians and militia. It was for this public ostensible reason Gen. Dearborn was censured. The secret reason was known to the then Secretary of War, General John Armstrong.

The troops felt themselves disgraced by the surrender of Boerstler, while a gloom pervaded the army, which Gen. Dearborn found necessary to dissipate ; and his health improving, he the next morning resumed the command of the army. He was astonished to find that such was the panic occasioned by this affair, that every exertion was requisite to restore tranquility and firmness among the troops. A sentiment had gone abroad that the army must recross the Niagara, and abandon the Canadian shore.

He assembled the field officers, stated the dangerous tendency of the prevailing gloom, and that every exertion must be made to animate the army ; that they were capable of maintaining their position, and he never would consent to a retrograde movement. The officers coincided with him in opinion, and were directed to disseminate this determination among the troops. To convince them of the unalterable decision of the General, the boats were ordered to the American side of the river : to restore confidence in the troops of the strength of their position, every exertion was made to put Fort George in the best possible posture of defence. The General, at this period, had so far recovered as to mark out the form of the works, which were thrown up in twenty-four hours.

The enemy, having received large reinforcements advanced to Twenty Mile Creek. The officers were gratified to see the General in command, after a fever of thirty-six days. A few nights after the army was intrenched, he mounted his horse on an alarm, rode down the line, and as he passed, harangued the troops that victory was certain, and the next day would close the war at that end of the lake. The unexpected appearance of the Commander-in-Chief at the head of the army, after so severe a sickness, renewed their confidence ; while his exhortations to them to conduct themselves like *Americans* who were never beaten, inspired them with animation. General Bearborn, notwithstanding his renewed exertions before his strength was fully reinstated, had rapidly recovered his health, when, on the

14th of July, the extraordinary and unexpected order to retire from command, was received from the Secretary of War.

While Gen. Dearborn was confined to his quarters at Fort George, by severe indisposition, which made it necessary for him to relinquish the command of the army for a few days, General Lewis made a communication to the Secretary of War relative to the expedition to Stony Creek, in which he indelicately alluded to General Dearborn, and observed that, "*he would never be fit for service again.*" Gen. Dearborn wrote Gen. Lewis the following letter, as soon as he noticed his in the National Intelligencer.

"Niagara, July 7th, 1813.

DEAR SIR,—

Notwithstanding your gloomy predictions, in your official report to the Secretary of War; whether, '*Fit*' or '*Not*,' it is more than ten days since I reassumed the command of the army, and the 9th military district of course. Your delicate description of my state of health was peculiarly calculated for soothing the minds of my children and friends, who had been previously informed of my indisposition.

Your *motives* must be best known to yourself, but from your general deportment as a gentleman of sensibility and politeness, I could not have believed you capable of so far deviating from your usual character. In your account of the affair at Stoney Creek, the decided and positive condemnation of a general officer, whose situa-

tion will not admit of his vindicating himself, may have been premature.

I should not, sir, have troubled you with any remarks on your official report, had it not sentenced me to death, and as I conceive, without just cause, and in a manner too, not the most delicate, and quite unnecessary in such a report.

Your obedient servant &c.

H. DEARBORN.

GENERAL LEWIS."

As a proof of the motive which induced General Lewis, who was the brother-in-law of Armstrong, to write the letter, and that his predictions were not such as he really believed; a few days after the date of his letter to the department of War, while at home, on his way to Sackett's Harbor, whither he had been ordered by General Dearborn, he wrote a letter to him, urging him to *reassume the command of the army*, as he understood General Hampton had arrived at Albany, and was fearful he would take command of District No. 9; and stated that he had no confidence in him, and conceived it highly important for the good of the Union, that Gen. Dearborn should immediately *reassume his command*. In his reply to Gen. Dearborn's letter, he stated that he intended no reflection on him, and "*had no idea the letter would have been published*," which he wrote Armstrong; thus clearly showing, that he did not believe to be true, what he stated in relation to Gen. Dearborn's health, or capacity to command, but that it



was to be made use of *privately*, by being shown the President to injure Gen. Dearborn ; for if he believed Gen. Dearborn would never “ *be fit for service again,*” why did he urge him to *reassume the command* of the army, within five or six days after the date of the letter to Armstrong ; for the order to remove Gen. Dearborn was dated but a few days after Lewis’s communication was published in the Intelligencer ; notwithstanding the Secretary had *previously* received a letter from General Dearborn, informing him of the *rapid recovery of his health*, and that he had *reassumed the command* of the army, which letter, it is presumed he did not show the President, but ordered his immediate removal, which was with difficulty effected, as will appear from the following sketch of a conversation, which took place between Gen. Wilkinson and Armstrong on the subject. “ John Armstrong, Esq., Secretary of War, told General Wilkinson on the 1st or 2d of August, 1813, that it was with difficulty he could prevail on the President, calling him the “ *little man,*” to agree to the recall of General Dearborn from command, and informed Wilkinson at the same time, *that disobedience of orders* was one of the causes of Gen. Dearborn’s recall from command. He gave the same reason to Dr. Ball for Gen. Dearborn’s recall ; and in a series of documents respecting the campaign, which were submitted to General Wilkinson by Armstrong, the fact of Gen. Dearborn’s disobedience of orders, was endeavored to be sustained by the circumstance of his *attack on York*, instead of *Kingston*, as he was *ordered*. The assertion as to the *disobedience*

*of orders* above alluded to is unfounded, as will appear by a letter from Gen. Armstrong to Gen. Dearborn, contained in a report from the former to Congress, the next winter after the capture of York, in which that movement is approved and was sanctioned.

“ *War Department, 6th July, 1813.*

SIR,

I have the orders of the President to express to you his decision, that you retire from the command of District No. 9, and the troops within the same, until your health be re-established, and until further orders. I have the honor to be, Sir, with very great respect, your most obedient and very humble servant.

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

MAJ. GEN. H. DEARBORN.”

### GENERAL ORDERS.

*Head Quarters, Fort George, July 1st, 1813.*

Having received an order from the Secretary of War, to retire from my present command, *until my health shall be re-established, and until further orders*, the command of the army will at present devolve on Brigade General Boyd. I embrace this occasion for expressing my hearty and most ardent wishes for the happiness and success of the troops I have had the honor of commanding; of whose bravery and zeal in the service of their country, I have experienced the most distinguished proofs, and for whose fame and welfare, I feel the warmest and strongest interest. While absent, the confidence

I shall repose in the soldierly qualities of the officers and men, will be a source of the most pleasing anticipations of their future glory. Were I permitted to consult my own feelings, no consideration would induce me to leave the army at this important crisis ; *but the duty of a soldier is to obey the orders of his superiors.*

H. DEARBORN,  
Maj. Gen. Com. Military District No. 9."

About twelve o'clock on the day the foregoing order was promulgated, the following address, signed by all the field and staff officers of the army, stationed at Fort George, was presented to General Dearborn.

*Fort George, July 15, 1813.*

TO MAJOR GENERAL DEARBORN, COMMANDING, &c. &c.  
SIR,—

We, the undersigned, general and field officers of the army, who have served under your orders the present campaign, having heard with regret, that it is your intention to retire from your present command, beg leave respectfully to address you upon the subject. We are far from presuming, sir, to interfere with arrangements made by authority when announced, but humbly conceive the present circumstances of this army are such as will, when taken into serious consideration, convince you that your longer continuance with us is of the first importance, at this moment, if not absolutely *indispensable* to the good of the service. We are now in a hostile country, and in the immediate neighborhood of a pow-

erful, though beaten enemy—an enemy whose strength is daily recruiting by the arrival of reinforcements. In our own numbers, too, we have strength and confidence; our position has been well chosen for defence, and the moment for advancing upon the enemy may soon be expected to come. But to operate with success, it is necessary that we should have our complement of officers. But *two Generals* now remain, whereas our numbers would give full employment for three. If you, too, unfortunately should be taken from us (at such a period as the present,) the deficiencies cannot be soon supplied, and in the meantime the enemy and the renewal of operations are at hand.

Sir, we are far from distrusting our own ability to execute the commissions with which we have respectively been honored by our Government, and have no design of converting this address into one of mere personal adulation. We know your averseness to flattery, and, as soldiers, we are unaccustomed to flatter. But the circumstances under which we address you oblige us to say, that the knowledge we possess of your numerous services and merits, in the ardent struggles of our glorious Revolution—not to speak of more recent events, in which we might be supposed to feel too warmly as participators—has given us an infinitely higher confidence in your ability to command, with energy and effect, than we can possibly feel individually in ourselves, or generally in those who will be placed in stations of increasing responsibility, by your withdrawal from this army. As soldiers, we trust we shall be found equal to our



duties in any event ; but as soldiers and lovers of our country, we wish to perform our duties under the most favorable auspices ; therefore we do most earnestly entreat you to postpone the resolution we understand you have taken, and to continue in the exercise of that command, which you have already holden with honor to yourself and country, and with what is of less consequence, the approbation of those who now address you. If, however, contrary to our ardent wishes, and contrary to what appear the exigencies of this army, you should feel yourself bound from any cause whatever, to withdraw from the frontier, in such event, we have to beg that you will please to bear with you, whithersoever you may go, the recollection of our great veneration for your revolutionary services ; our respect for your political constancy and virtue ; and the high sense we unanimously entertain of the benefits your country has already received at your hands, since the commencement of the present war. With these sentiments, and the best wishes for the speedy and perfect restoration of your health, we have the honor to be, with the highest gratitude and respect, your most obedient servants,

I. P. BOYD, Brigadier General.  
 M. PORTER, Col. light artillery.  
 JAMES BURNS, Col. 2d reg. drag.  
 H. BRADY, Col. 22d infantry.  
 C. PEARCE, Col. 16th infantry.  
 JAMES MILLER, Col. 6th inf.  
 W. SCOTT, Col. and Adj't Gen.  
 E. BEEBE, Assistant Adj't Gen.  
 H. V. MILTON, Lieut. Col. 8th inf.  
 I. CHRYSSTIE, Col. 22d infantry.  
 I. P. PRESTON Lt Col 12th inf com.  
 I. P. MITCHELL, Lt Col 3rd artil  
 I. L. SMITH, Lt. Col. 24th inf.

A. EUSTIS, Major light artillery  
 T. A. POSEY, Major 5th inf.  
 J. H. HUYICH, Major 13th inf.  
 N. PINKEY, Major 5th reg't.  
 R. LUCAS, Major 23d inf.  
 I. WOODFORD, Maj. 2d reg. drag.  
 J. JOHNSON, Major 21st inf.  
 W. CUMMING, Major 8th inf.  
 I. E. WOOL, Major infantry.  
 W. MORGAN, Major 12th inf.  
 B. FORSYTH, Major rifle reg't.  
 A. M. MALCOMB, Major 13th inf.



To the foregoing address, General Dearborn made the following reply :

GENTLEMEN,

It is with sentiments of grateful feeling, and the liveliest satisfaction, that I have observed your expressions of personal friendship and confidence. I regret that my ability to serve my country is not commensurate with the devotion and zeal I have ever felt, for the cause in which it is so honorably engaged ; a cause on which our national character, and the dearest rights of individuals are staked.

By referring to the general order of this date, you will perceive the *necessity* of my retiring from the command of the army on this frontier. Be assured, gentlemen, that a recollection of the patience and soldier-like deportment of yourselves, and the officers and men under your command, in scenes of privation and suffering—your regularity and discipline in camp—your cool intrepidity in the hour of threatening and danger—and order and bravery in action, will be among my most pleasing remembrances throughout life ; and I look forward with confidence to the future glory of the soldiers who conquered at York and Newark. Be pleased, gentlemen, to accept my warmest wishes for your health and happiness, and may your arduous and honorable services be duly appreciated by the government, and a grateful country. I have the honor to be, &c., &c.,

H. DEARBORN."

General Dearborn having determined to leave Fort George at three o'clock, all the officers waited on him at two, and, each shaking him by the hand, took an affectionate leave; then accompanied him to the banks of the Niagara, whence he embarked to cross the river. The military band placed in Brock's Bastion paid appropriate honors to their departing General, and a salute was fired from the ramparts of the fort. A troop of horse received him on the opposite shore, and escorted him to Lewistown. As soon as he reached Utica, he sent the following letter to the President of the United States:

“ *Utica, July 24, 1813.*

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES:

SIR—From the unequivocal and positive order received from the Secretary of War, (a copy of which I take the liberty of enclosing,) I had no option, but implicit obedience; and I retired within twenty-four hours after the receipt of that order. My health had so much improved as to enable me to resume the command of the troops on the 16th of June, of which I had informed the Secretary of War. By a letter from the War Department, of the 27th of May, I am informed that Major General Hampton would set out on the next day for this army. I anxiously expected his arrival by the 18th or 20th June; but, by a letter dated the 30th of June, the Secretary of War gave me the *first notice* of the formation of an army in Vermont, and of the destination of Generals Hampton and Parker to that army.

From the daily expectation of the arrival of General Hampton, Major General Lewis was directed to proceed to Sackett's Harbor, to take the command of the troops assembled and assembling at that place. As I was suspended from all command, I shall return to my family, near Boston. I shall never complain of being so disposed of as the good of the service may require; but the manner of performing an act gives a *character* to the act itself; and considering the particular *manner* and time of my removal from command, I trust it will not be deemed improper to afford me the satisfaction of an inquiry, for investigating any part of my conduct that may have been deemed improper, and on which my suspension from command may have been predicated. I have the honor of being, with the highest respect, sir, your obedient, humble servant,

H. DEARBORN."

A few days after he reached his seat in Roxbury, he received the subjoined answer from the President:

*Washington, August 8, 1813.*

DEAR SIR—

I have received yours of the 24th July. As my esteem and regard have undergone no change, I wish you to be apprised that such was the state of things, and such the turn they were taking, that the retirement, which is the subject of your letter, was proposed by *your best personal friends*.

It was my purpose to have written to you on the oc-

casion, but it was made impossible by a severe illness, from which I am now barely enough recovered for a journey to the mountains, prescribed by my physicians as indispensable. It would have been entirely agreeable to me if, as I took for granted was the case, you had executed your original intention, of providing for your health by exchanging the sickliness of Niagara for some eligible spot ; and I sincerely lament every pain to which you have been subsequently exposed, from whatever circumstance it has proceeded.

How far the investigation you refer to would be regular, I am not prepared to say. You have seen the motion in the House of Representatives, comprehending such an object, and the prospect held out of resuming the subject at another session. I am persuaded that you will not lose in any respect by the effect of time and truth. Accept my respects and best wishes.

JAMES MADISON.

MAJOR GENERAL DEARBORN."

General Dearborn was not ignorant who his *best personal friends*, mentioned in the above letter, were ; and, after a constant effort of more than a year, the Secretary of War and similar friends had been able to succeed in the recall of General Dearborn ; and we shall see that he succeeded more fully in effecting his object against General Harrison, whose resignation took place soon after, in consequence of the repeated insults he received from the War Department. To the above letter of the President's, General Dearborn replied :

*" Roxbury, August 17, 1813.*

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES:

SIR—I have been honored with your letter of the 8th inst. It is peculiarly gratifying in my present situation to be apprized that your esteem and regard had undergone no change, and that you are persuaded that I shall not lose in any respect "by the effect of time and truth;" but, at my time of life, it could hardly be expected that I should quietly acquiesce in so unusual and unprecedented a measure as that of being removed from command in the manner I have. From the peculiar tenor of the order, the measure cannot be viewed in any other light than as the result of an opinion that I had been guilty of such misconduct as to render my removal necessary.

To suspend an officer of my grade and situation in command, except by the sentence of a court martial, or the opinion of a court of inquiry, is such a strong measure, as on general principles could only be justified by the most unequivocal and outrageous misconduct of the officer; and I cannot permit myself to doubt but that, on reflection, it will be considered proper to afford me a hearing before a suitable military tribunal, previous to my being again ordered on duty.

I find it is pretended that my suspension from command was merely to comply with my repeated requests for being allowed to retire for the recovery of my health, but every one acquainted with the facts, and with the peculiar expressions made use of in the order, will readily perceive that such pretence is unfounded.



In the order I complain of, it being explicitly expressed that it came directly from the President of the United States, will, I hope, be admitted as an apology for my having addressed my observations directly to yourself. I shall rely with the fullest confidence, sir, on your justice for such fair and honorable proceedings as my situation demands. That your health may be speedily re-established is, sir, the sincere prayer of your most obedient and humble servant.

H. DEARBORN."

— Notwithstanding General Dearborn had requested not to be ordered on duty until his military conduct had been investigated by a competent tribunal, a different course was pursued by the President.

In the later part of August, Col. G. G. Conner, one of General Dearborn's aids, requested that he might be permitted to join his regiment on the frontiers, where he could be actively employed. On his arrival at Sackett's Harbor, he waited on General Armstrong, and stated the object of his return to the army. General Armstrong informed him he had just received the directions of the President to order General Dearborn to assume the command of District No. 3, as it was expected the British contemplated an attack on New-York, and advised him to return immediately to General Dearborn. In a few days after, the following order was received by General Dearborn :

*War Department, Sackett's Harbor, }  
Sept. 24th, 1813. }*

SIR—The enemy's squadron left the Chesapeake, and a belief existing that they mean to shape their course northerly, and perhaps with a view to New-York, you will be pleased, on receipt hereof, to repair to that post, and take on yourself the command of District No, 3. I am, sir, very respectfully, your most obedient and very humble servant,

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

MAJOR GENERAL DEARBORN, *Boston.*

It was very extraordinary, and so General Dearborn considered it, that he should be called into service before the subject of his removal from Fort George had been investigated. That his reputation had very severely and unjustly suffered from that account, he was well satisfied, and conceiving that the public might entertain sentiments injurious to his character as an officer, if he should again go into service, without an opportunity of publicly vindicating himself, doubted the propriety of obeying the order, and had it in contemplation to resign immediately, but on mature deliberation, he concluded to proceed to New-York, as the circumstance of his being ordered to an honorable command was a public acknowledgment on the part of the executive, that his reputation had not suffered, or had suffered without cause, and particularly when the reasons assigned for the order, were such as evinced no loss of confidence in him by the President; besides, if he resigned, he would

be for ever precluded from having an opportunity to defend himself before a military tribunal, which he sanguinely anticipated ; and for which, on his arrival at New-York, he reiterated his request.

After the disgraceful close of the campaign of 1813, conducted by Armstrong, Wilkinson, and Hampton, he had an interview with Gen. Armstrong at New York, as he passed through the city from the frontier to Washington, and urged that a court should be immediately organized, as during the winter a sufficient number of General officers could be spared from their command for that service. Gen. Armstrong endeavored to dissuade him from such a measure, and assured him that no blame was attached to him, and that his whole conduct met the approbation of the Government ; that a court was not in the least necessary, for there were no charges to be preferred against him. General Dearborn observed, whatever might be the sentiments of the national Executive, it was notorious his reputation suffered in public estimation, as the correspondence on the subject could not be laid before the public in a manner which corresponded with his feelings as an officer, nor was the favorable opinion entertained by the Government known to the world ; and there was no way of doing him ample justice, but by the promulgation of the decision of a competent court, which would be as notorious as the fact of his unprecedented removal. It was an act of justice due to him, and he owed it to himself, children, friends, and the people of the United States, to demand as a right a Court of Inquiry, and which he should never cease to urge.

While in Albany, during the winter of 1813-14, finding that his request had not been granted, he wrote the following letter to the Secretary of War :

*Albany January 2, 1814.*

SIR,

“In my letter to you a few days after I received your order to retire from command, I expressed a wish that I might be allowed a Court of Inquiry, and I also communicated a similar desire to the President of the United States. I waited for the return of the President and Secretary of War to the seat of Government, as a convenient time for having my application attended to. I had hoped that I should be favored with a hearing before a suitable court, without any more direct application on my part ; but having received no intimation to that effect, I consider it necessary to state explicitly, and request, that as soon as I am relieved from the tour of duty I am now about commencing, [as President of the Court Martial for the trial of General Hull,] I may be indulged with a hearing before such a court as may be deemed proper. .

“From your own remarks, and from common report, it appears that some general disapprobation had been excited against my conduct as commander of the army in the ninth District, and particularly on account of the disaster of Lieutenant Colonel Boerstler and the detachment under his command ; and for having been guilty of disobedience of orders. It must be evident, from the extraordinary manner of my being suspended from

command, that strong impressions had been made on the mind of the President, to my prejudice, previous to his giving explicit directions for that measure, as expressed in the order for my removal.

"'Tis therefore evidently necessary, that a fair and impartial investigation should be had; not only as an act of common justice due to myself, but for affording such information and satisfaction to the public, as ought not to be withheld. I therefore, do most earnestly request, that a Court of Inquiry be ordered for the investigation of my conduct generally, while commanding the 9th Military District; and particularly in relation to such parts thereof, as the President of the United States may have deemed improper; and I must take the liberty of requesting that I may not be ordered on any command until I have been indulged with such an investigation."

I have the honor to be &c.,

H. DEARBORN.

HON. JOHN ARMSTRONG, Secretary of War.

The next spring, finding his demand was still waived, he wrote to the Secretary of State, and desired him to lay the subject before the President, who returned the following answer.

*Washington, June 15, 1814.*

DEAR SIR,

"I ought to have answered your letter sooner, especially as it related to a subject which I find deeply



interests you. The late extraordinary events in Europe, with the duties imposed on me by the arrival of the Oliver, will I hope, plead my apology.

“You say that you ought to have an inquiry into your conduct, to justify you against any imputation arising from the terms of the order which withdrew you from the command on the lines. I have communicated your impressions to the President, who is perfectly well disposed to afford you the opportunity which you desire, at a time when it may be done without injury to the service. My own idea is, that you require no vindication in the case alluded to; that public opinion has already done you justice. You may recollect that you had been infirm, and had even intimated a doubt whether your health would permit you to retain the command of the troops. Of the President’s constant friendship for you, and attention to every circumstance interesting to your honor and feelings, I can speak with the utmost confidence, as I can that his disposition toward you has undergone no change. I am satisfied that he had the highest confidence in your integrity, attachment to free government, and ability to command; diminished only by the infirmity alluded to, which had more weight, considering the very active service imposed on you at your time of life. That confidence is unimpaired.

“In such a movement as that in which we are engaged, every thing is experimental. The fitness of men for stations is equally so. In my opinion you have much reason to be satisfied, because the door has been

opened to others, who, whatever may have been their merits, have not placed you in an unfavorable light before our country. What you did, gained you credit. Had you been continued on the frontiers exposed to the changes of the seasons, and extraordinary fatigues of the campaign, and sunk under them by ill health, reproach and censure might have fallen heavily on you, as well as the Government.

"I am, however, far from dissuading you from taking any course, which, on great consideration, you may find essential to your honor or happiness, I only wish, that it may not be done under improper impression, and that in taking that which you seem to contemplate, it may be done at a suitable time. In pursuing any object which you may have in view, I beg you to command my services without reserve. Be assured it will give me sincere pleasure to be useful to you. Always recollecting as Mrs. Monroe and I do, with deep interest, our meeting with your lady in London, and the very friendly intercourse which passed between us and our families, at a time the most interesting to our country and ourselves, we beg you to assure her of our constant affection and regards. With great respect and esteem, believe me, my dear sir,"

Sincerely yours,  
JAMES MONROE.

MAJOR GENERAL DEARBORN.

After Mr. Monroe was appointed Secretary of War, he wrote him again, on the subject of a *Court of Inquiry*

and other affairs, to which he received the annexed reply; from which it is clearly to be inferred that the military talents of General Dearborn were justly held in high estimation by that enlightened and virtuous patriot.

*Washington, July 21st, 1815.*

DEAR SIR,

“Accept my thanks for your kind attention in several letters, which would have been attended to at the time received, had not the important event of peace taken my attention to the other department, on which a pressure has since been made. This event in relation to the great body of our fellow-citizens, may be considered highly favorable. The honor of the nation is preserved in the treaty. No concession is made. Our land and naval forces have acquired glory, and the nation character by the contest. The period and circumstances under which the treaty was received and ratified, being just after the battle at New Orleans, made the result highly honorable.

“I am satisfied, had another campaign been made, that we should have shaken if not overset the power of Great Britain on this continent. Measures were taken for drawing into the field, in aid of the regular troops, twenty thousand men from New York, ten thousand from Vermont, and a strong force from Kentucky, Ohio, the western part of Virginia, and Pennsylvania, with a view to force our way toward Quebec, by suitable routes. In this movement you would have had a distinguished place. The peace has robbed you and many

others of glory, but you will find an indemnity for it in the advantages derived from it to your country. I requested General Swift to consult you and the other members of the board on the extent and manner of the reduction to a peace establishment, that I might avail myself of your reflections without compromising either of you. The passion is strong for extensive reduction. I hope it may be confined within proper limits. Perhaps you might be disposed to make a visit here. I should be happy to see you. With great respect and esteem,"

I am sincerely yours,

JAMES MONROE.

Notwithstanding the unceasing efforts of General Dearborn to obtain a hearing before a Court of Inquiry, that request was denied, and justice withheld from him; but if any doubts should have existed as to the estimation in which General Dearborn was held by the President, the following letter removes them:

*Washington, March 4th, 1815.*

DEAR SIR,

"Being desirous for obtaining for the Department of War services which I thought you could render with peculiar advantage, and hoping that, for a time at least, you might consent to step into that Department, I took the liberty, without a previous communication, for which there was no time, to nominate you as successor to Mr. Monroe, who was called back to the Department of State. I had not a doubt, from all the calculations I

could make, that the Senate would readily concur in my views; and if a doubt had arisen, it would have been banished by the confidence of the best informed and best disposed with whom I conferred, that the nomination would be welcomed when it was to be decided on; contrary to these confident expectations, an opposition was declared in an extent which determined me to withdraw the nomination.

“But, before the message arrived, the Senate very unexpectedly had taken up the subject and proceeded to a decision. They promptly, however, relaxed so far as to erase the proceedings from their journal, and in that mode give effect to the withdrawal. I have thought this explanation due, both to me and to yourself. I sincerely and deeply regret the occasion for it. But to whatever blame I may have subjected myself, I trust you will see, in the course taken by me, a proof of the high value I place on your public, and of the esteem I feel for your personal character. Permit me to add, that I have been not a little consoled for the occurrence to which I have been accessory, by the diffusive expressions to which it has led, of sentiments such as your best friends have heard with most pleasure. Accept the assurance of my great respect and sincere regard.”

JAMES MADISON.

MAJOR GENERAL DEARBORN.

After the nomination, a number of the Senators waited on the President, and he then gave them his opinion of General Dearborn, and explained to them



the whole transaction, which had done so much injury to a faithful, zealous, and deserving officer. They were astonished, and said, if this development had preceded the nomination, it would have been instantly confirmed.

It is to that *conversation* that the President alludes in the last clause of the forgoing letter, and a burst of indignation which assailed his ears from some of the friends of General Dearborn, who were acquainted with the facts, and openly declared their sentiments as to the wrongs done to a soldier who had grown gray in the service of his country—to a hero of the Revolution—who, when injured was denied the rights of an officer, and coldly neglected for “*time and truth*” to obliterate a stain imposed by executive injustice.

Those *best personal friends*, mentioned in the letter of the President of the 8th of August, were made to believe it was more for their *interest* to *destroy* the reputation of General Dearborn, than *vindicate* him when aspersed. They were such friends as for the time wear the mask of sincerity, but can throw it off when such an act of baseness will have a tendency to better their situation. They acted their part in such a manner as to *deceive* the President, and *hoped* to elude the suspicions of General Dearborn; but he knew them well, and the reasons which induced them to wrong him.

The tide of war had been changed by the capture of York and Fort George. Previously the arms of the United States had been disgraced, and accumulated disasters marked the events of the preceding campaigns.

An uninterrupted series of defeats had cast a gloom over the nation, which was dissipated by the splendid achievements of the army under the direction of General Dearborn. A large force was concentrating on the borders of Lake Champlain. The efforts of Harrison and Perry presaged glorious results in the West. On Lake Ontario, Com. Chauncy had so far increased his fleet as to render his ascendancy certain; and the army of the Niagara was ready to co-operate in such a manner as would render the conquest of Kingston, the whole of Upper Canada, and probably Montreal also certain. The prospect was propitious, and such were the matured plans of General Dearborn, *that victory would have perched on his banners.*

If General Dearborn could by *any means* be removed from command, and the Secretary of War repair to the frontier, direct the operations of the campaign, which had been gloriously opened, and bring it to a splendid conclusion, it would have given him such reputation and influence as would have obtained for him the appointment of *Lieutenant General* and commander-in-chief of the army of the United States, and thus secure to him the *Presidential* chair.

The views of the Secretary of War were early developed, of which General Dearborn was apprised by his *real* friends at Washington. *Two or three subalterns* on the frontiers were agents in the scheme of ambition, and hints were circulated, through the medium of *certain papers* in different sections of the Union, unfavorable to the military character of General Dear-

born, in the shape of "extracts of letters *from respectable officers of the army.*" Those "*respectable officers*" were early known to General Dearborn, but such was his confidence in the President, and the officers generally of the army, who duly appreciated his talents, and worth, and consciousness of his devotion to the best interests of his country, that he smiled at the indications of the impending storm which was lowering in the horizon for his destruction. Stimulated by the ambition of a Cæsar, the Rubicon of honor was, for the *second* time, passed, and with the sanguine anticipations of a Richard, the author of the Newburgh Letters, *the future hero of the north*, hurried to pitch his tent in *Bosworth fields*. Those friends of General Dearborn, who were so solicitous for his disgrace, had *golden* hopes from this event. But the disastrous and disgraceful movements of the army, under the guidance of the Secretary of War, caused those hopes to wither, and the triumphal entry of the British into the city of Washington blasted them for ever. The descent of the St. Lawrence and the Bladensburgh retreat *damned Armstrong*, and General Dearborn's "*best personal friends*" lost their *anticipated reward*, for assisting to blast his reputation.

At the close of the war, honorable to the American arms and character, General Dearborn was called on by the government for his aid and advice in the reduction of the army to the peace establishment, and the retention of the most suitable and competent officers to be continued in command. That this delicate operation when many good officers must be dismissed, was performed

with ability and uprightness, with the sole view to the honor of the army and good of the country, appears from the names of the principal officers retained—Brown, Jackson, Scott, McComb, Gaines, Ripley and Miller.

Soon after he retired from the army to private life, he was called before the public by the republican party, as their candidate for Governor of the ancient Commonwealth of Massachusetts. For this office he was opposed by the federal party, then a large majority in the state, and an opposing candidate of respectable abilities, revolutionary services and unimpeached moral character. Under these circumstances, his personal and political friends could hardly expect a favorable result for their candidate; and General Brooks, the opposing candidate, was elected Governor.

Early in 1822, he was appointed by President Monroe, with the unanimous consent of the senate, minister plenipotentiary to the Court of Portugal. There were no events of special interest in that mission. He was highly respected by the king and court to which he was accredited and all the foreign ministers then resident at Lisbon, and discharged his duties in a manner entirely to the satisfaction of his own government. In 1824, he returned home, and was never after in any public employment. After the revolutionary war and the organization of the federal government till 1824, General Dearborn received appointments from four Presidents of the United States—all Virginians—Washington, Jefferson, Madison and Monroe. All these offices were of high responsibility—Marshall of Maine, Secretary of War, Collector of the



port of Boston, Commander-in-chief of the army, and Foreign minister.

In all these important offices he acted with ability, integrity, and the most unsullied reputation as a patriot. On the 6th of June, 1829, at his seat at Roxbury, Mass., he died, in the seventy-ninth year of his age.

General Dearborn was stout and active, six feet full in height, strong, and in middle age not too much encumbered with flesh : in after life his flesh rather increased. He was exactly fitted for the toils, fatigues and pomp of war. His countenance and whole person was dignified and commanding. His weight was considerably above two hundred. His mind was solid and comprehensive, which entitled him to the highest military stations.

There was a loftiness in his character which forbade resort to intrigue and hypocrisy, in the accomplishment of his views, and he rejected the contemptible practice of disparaging others to exalt himself. He was beneficent to his friends, but reserved and cold toward those whose correctness in moral principles became doubtful in his mind.

As a soldier, he was a rigid, but not a severe disciplinarian ; he obeyed readily his superior, and required the like obedience from his inferior. From his active mind and athletic body, he was from early life a sportsman, and indulged in the amusement of fishing. His fowling-piece and every accompaniment was always in readiness, as well as his fishing-apparatus, which, in the latter part of his life, he carried with him in his every journey to



the State of Maine. In these sports, his dog was never forgotten.

The games of cricket and ball he practiced with ardor till past the meridian of life. But, of the gymnastic exercises, in the revolutionary war and after, practised much more then than at this day, wrestling was probably his favorite ; for, from his skill, great muscular power, and temperance in all things, he obtained the mastery on every occasion. When not engaged in business, or otherwise occupied, he was a constant reader through life, not only of all the old English standard works, but of all new publications of merit. One of the few times the writer ever saw him, he found him reading Scott's "Ivanhoe," which was laid aside on the introduction of a few strangers, among whom was one of the oldest physicians and accomplished gentlemen in the city of Boston. A variety of subjects were started in conversation, and the physician repeatedly afterward expressed his surprise at the correctness and ability with which he entered into every subject started, declaring that previously he had considered him merely a military character.

At the age of twenty-one years, in 1771, he married Mary Bartlett, one of the most ancient names in New Hampshire, by whom he had two daughters. She died in 1778. In 1780 he married Dorcas Marble, a widow lady of Andover, Mass., by whom he had two sons and a daughter. This second wife died in 1811. In 1813 he married Sarah Bowdoin, widow of the Hon. James Bowdoin, who died in 1826, without children. He sur-

vived all his wives, with whom he lived in perfect domestic happiness, more than fifty years.

It is only known that one daughter and one son, by his second wife, survive him. The daughter has long been respectably and eligibly married, residing in Maine. From her purity of character and good sense, she is distinguished in the society in which she moves. The son is resident in the vicinity of Boston, who bears the name of his father, to which is added the name of Alexander Scammell, who has been previously mentioned in this sketch.

It is believed the son, in a good measure, sustains the excellencies and virtues of the persons whose names he bears : if so, few men, if any, can stand higher. To place these children where only they could wish to be placed, is to say what is known of them : they appreciate the character of their parent, remember his example, and follow his precepts. General Dearborn continued through life in that branch of the Christian church in which he had been educated—the Congregational : not that he believed it essential that the true worshipper of the Father should attach himself to any one sect or denomination, but he did believe that the Congregational order was more congenial to our republican institutions, apostolic example and precept, and, more than all, gave fuller latitude to the exercise of private judgment in everything ecclesiastical and religious. He believed it Life to believe on the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom he sent ; and he believed this Teacher was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. In this belief he left this

life for a future, in the full possession of a calm and sound mind.

He often mentioned General Arnold, whom he well knew, being with him when wounded at Quebec and Saratoga. He considered him, for energy and capacity, the first general officer of the Revolution, and often expressed his astonishment at his treason. He despised him as a traitor, but never failed to speak of him as most able and gallant in action, always ready and collected, and saw instantly the exact thing to be done, and at the proper moment. He considered him capable of doing the most desperate deeds as a commander. Neither Gates nor Congress, in his opinion, did him justice for his conduct at Saratoga ; for he was the only general on the field, and fought the battle in defiance of Gates, who never left his quarters, or at least he was not seen in action, neither did he believe he was.

Soon after the war of independence, he accidentally met Arnold at St. Johns. Arnold attempted to excuse his conduct, and appeared not only solicitous, but in distress to explain ; but Gen. Dearborn at once put an end to the conversation, by saying, his conduct was indefensible, and he held his character in such estimation, that no excuse or explanation could be made, and he wished not to hear him on that subject, for his own opinion was not to be changed.

None of General Dearborn's writings have fallen into the writer's hands ; but his official letters, and reports, as secretary of war, and his account of the battle of Bunker's Hill, have been before the public. That account will

be here inserted, as well for its apparent accuracy and truth, as giving a specimen of his style of writing :

“ On the 16th of June, 1775, it was determined that a fortified post should be established at or near Bunker’s Hill. A detachment of the army was ordered to advance early in the evening of that day, and commence the erection of a strong work on the heights in the rear of Charlestown, at that time called Breed’s Hill ; but, from its proximity to Bunker’s Hill, the battle has taken its name from the latter eminence, which overlooks it.

“ The work was commenced and carried on under the direction of such engineers as we were able to procure at that time. It was a square redoubt, the curtains of which were about sixty or seventy feet in extent, with an intrenchment extending fifty or sixty feet from the northern angle, toward Mystic river. In the course of the night, the ramparts had been raised to the height of six or seven feet, with a small ditch at their base ; but it was yet in an imperfect state. Being in full view from the northern heights of Boston, it was discovered by the enemy at daylight, and a determination was formed by General Gage for dislodging our troops from this new and alarming position. Arrangements were promptly made for effecting this important object. The movement of the British troops, indicating an attack, were soon discovered ; in consequence of which, orders were immediately issued for the march of a considerable part of our army, to reinforce the detachment at the redoubts on Breed’s Hill ; but such was the imperfect state of discipline, the want

of knowledge in military science, and the deficiency of the materials of war, that the movement of the troops was extremely irregular, and 'devoid of every thing like concert—each regiment advanced according to the opinions, *feelings*, or caprice of the commander.

“Colonel Stark’s\* regiment was quartered at Medford, distant about four miles from the point of anticipated attack. It consisted of thirteen companies, and was the largest regiment in the army. About ten o’clock in the morning he received orders to march. The regiment being destitute of ammunition, formed in front of a house occupied as an arsenal, where each man received a *gill cup* full of powder, fifteen balls, and one flint. The several captains were then ordered to march their companies to their respective quarters, and to make up their powder and balls into cartridges with the greatest possible despatch. As there were scarcely two muskets in a company of equal calibre, it was necessary to reduce the size of the balls for many of them; and as but a small proportion of the men had cartridge-boxes, the remainder made use of powder-horns and ball-pouches.

“After completing the necessary preparations for action, the regiment formed and marched about one o’clock. When it reached Charlestown Neck, we found two regiments halted in consequence of a heavy enfilading fire

\* This distinguished veteran is still alive, (1818) in the 91st year of his age, and resides in the State of New Hampshire. He is one of the THREE surviving general officers of the revolutionary war. The other two are Maj. Gen. St. Clair, who lives in the interior of Pennsylvania, and Brig. Gen. Huntington, of Connecticut.



thrown across it, of round, bar and chain shot, from the Lively frigate and floating batteries anchored in Charles river and a floating battery lying in the river Mystic. Major McClary went forward and observed to the commanders, if they did not intend to move on, he wished them to open and let our regiment pass: the latter was immediately done. My company being in front, I marched by the side of Col. Stark; who moving with a very deliberate pace, I suggested the propriety of quickening the march of the regiment, that it might sooner be relieved from the galling cross-fire of the enemy. With a look peculiar to himself, he fixed his eyes upon me, and observed with great composure, ‘Dearborn, one fresh man in action is worth ten fatigued ones,’ and continued to advance in the same cool and collected manner. When we had reached Bunker’s Hill, where General Putnam had taken his station, the regiment halted for a few minutes for the rear to come up. Soon after, the enemy were discovered to have landed on the shore at Morton’s Point, in front of Breed’s Hill, under cover of a tremendous fire of shot and shells from a battery on Cop’s Hill, in Boston, which had opened on the redoubt at day-break.

“Major-general Howe and Brigadier-general Pigot were the commanders of the British forces which first landed, consisting of four battalions of infantry, ten companies of grenadiers, and ten of light infantry, with a train of artillery. They formed as they disembarked, but remained in that position until they were reinforced. At this moment the veteran and gallant Stark harangued

his regiment in a short but animated address ; then directed them to give three cheers, and make a rapid movement to the rail-fence which ran from the left, and about forty yards in the rear of the redoubt, toward the Mystic river.

“ Part of the grass having been recently cut, lay in winrows and cocks on the field. Another fence was taken up, the rails run through the one in front, and the hay mown in the vicinity, suspended upon them, from the bottom to the top, which had the appearance of a breast-work, but was in fact no real cover to the men ; it however served as a deception to the enemy. This was done by the direction of the ‘ *committee of safety*,’ of which James Winthrop, Esq. who then, and now lives in Cambridge, was one, as he has within a few years informed me. Mr. Winthrop himself acted as a volunteer on that day, and was wounded in the battle.

“ At this moment, our regiment was formed in the rear of the rail fence, with one other small regiment from New Hampshire, under the command of Col. Reed ; the fire commenced between the left wing of the British army, commanded by Gen. Howe, and the troops in the redoubt under Colonel Prescott, while a column of the enemy was advancing on our left, on the shore of Mystic river, with an evident intention of turning our left wing, and that veteran and most excellent regiment of Welsh fusileers, so distinguished for its gallant conduct in the battle of Minden, advanced in column directly on the rail fence ; when within eighty or a hundred yards, displayed into line, with the precision and firmness of troops on

parade, and opened a brisk but regular fire by platoons, which was returned by a well-directed, rapid and fatal discharge from our whole line.

“The action soon became general, and very heavy from right to left. In ten or fifteen minutes the enemy gave away at all points, and retreated in great disorder, leaving a large number of dead and wounded on the field. The firing ceased for a short time, when the enemy formed, advanced, and re-commenced a spirited fire from his whole line. Several attempts were again made to turn our left, but the troops having thrown up a slight stone wall on the bank of the river, and laying down behind it, gave such a deadly fire, as cut down almost every man of the party opposed to them; while the fire from the redoubt and the rail fence was so well directed and so fatal, especially to the British officers, that the whole army was compelled a second time to retreat with precipitation and great confusion. At this time the ground was covered with the dead and wounded. Only a few small detached parties again advanced, which kept up a distant, ineffectual, scattering fire, until a strong reinforcement arrived from Boston, which advanced on the southern declivity of the hill, in the rear of Charlestown; it wheeled by platoons to the right and advanced directly on the redoubt, without firing a gun. By this time our ammunition was exhausted; a few only had a charge left.

“The advancing column made an attempt to carry the redoubt by assault; but, at the first onset, every man that mounted the parapet was cut down by the troops within,

who had formed on the opposite side, not being prepared with bayonets to meet a charge. The column wavered for a moment, but soon formed again ; when a forward movement was made, with such spirit and intrepidity, as to render the feeble efforts of a handful of men, without the means of defence, unavailing ; and they fled through an open space in the rear of the redoubt, which had been left for a gate-way. At this moment the rear of the British column advanced round the angle of the redoubt, and threw in a galling flank fire upon our troops, as they rushed from it, which killed and wounded a greater number than had fallen before during the action. The whole of our line immediately gave way and retreated with rapidity towards Bunker's Hill, carrying off as many of the wounded as possible, so that only thirty-six or seven fell into the hands of the enemy—among whom were Lt. Col. Parker, and two or three other officers who fell in or near the redoubt.

“ When the troops arrived at the summit of Bunker's Hill, we found Gen. Putnam, with nearly as many men as had been engaged in the battle ; notwithstanding which no measure had been taken for reinforcing us, nor was there a shot fired to cover our retreat, or any movement made to check the advance of the enemy to this height ; but on the contrary, Gen. Putnam rode off, with a number of spades and pick-axes in his hands, and the troops that had remained with him *inactive* during the whole of the action, although within a few hundred yards of the battle-ground and no obstacle to impede their movement but musket-balls.

“The whole of our troops now descended the north-west declivity of Bunker’s Hill, and re-crossed the Neck. The New Hampshire line towards Winter Hill, and the others on to Prospect Hill. Some slight works were thrown up in the course of the evening—strong advance pickets were posted on the roads leading to Charlestown, and the troops, anticipating an attack, rested on their arms.

“It is a most extraordinary fact that the British did not make a single charge during the battle, which, if attempted, would have proved fatal and decisive, as the Americans did not carry fifty bayonets into the field. In my company there was but one. Soon after the commencement of the action, a detachment from the British force in Boston landed in Charlestown; and within a few moments the whole town was in a blaze. A dense column rose to a great height, and there being a gentle breeze from the southwest, it hung like a thunder-cloud over the contending armies. A very few houses escaped the dreadful conflagration of this devoted town.

“From similar mistakes, the field-ammunition furnished for the field-pieces, was calculated for guns of a larger calibre, which prevented the use of field-artillery on both sides. There was no cavalry in either army.

“From the ships of war and a large battery on Cop’s Hill, a heavy cannonade was kept up upon our line and redoubt, from the commencement to the close of the action and during the retreat; but with little effect, except killing the brave Maj. Andrew M’Clary of Col. Stark’s regiment, soon after we retreated from Bunker’s Hill.



He was among the first officers of the army—possessing a sound judgment, of undaunted bravery, enterprising, ardent and zealous, both as a patriot and soldier. His loss was severely felt by his compatriots in arms, while his country was deprived of the services of one of her most promising and distinguished champions of liberty.

“After leaving the field of battle I met him and drank some spirit and water with him. He was animated and sanguine in the result of the conflict for independence, from the glorious display of valor which had distinguished his countrymen on that memorable day.

“He soon observed that the British troops on Bunker’s Hill appeared in motion, and said he would go and reconnoiter them, to see whether they were coming out over the neck, at the same time directed me to march my company down the road towards Charlestown. We were then at Tuft’s house near Ploughed Hill. I immediately made a forward movement to the position he directed me to take, and halted while he proceeded to the old pound, which stood on the site now occupied as a tavern-house not far from the entrance to the neck. After he had satisfied himself that the enemy did not intend to leave their strong posts on the heights, he was returning towards me, and within twelve or fifteen rods of where I stood with my company, a random shot, from one of the frigates lying near where the centre of Craigie’s bridge now is, passed directly through his body, and put to flight one of the most heroic souls that ever animated man.

“He leaped two or three feet from the ground, pitched

forward and fell dead upon his face. I had him carried to Medford, where he was interred, with all the respect and honors we could exhibit to the manes of a great and good man. He was my bosom friend ; we had grown up together on terms of the greatest intimacy, and I loved him as a brother.

“ My position in the battle, more the result of accident than any regularity of formation, was on the right of the line at the rail-fence, which afforded me a fair view of the whole scene of action.

“ Our men were intent on cutting down every officer they could distinguish in the British line. When any of them discovered one he would instantly exclaim, ‘ there ! see that officer ! let us have a shot at him ! ’ when two or three would fire at the same moment ; and as our soldiers were excellent marksmen and rested their muskets over the fence, they were sure of their object. An officer was discovered to mount near the position of Gen. Howe, on the left of the British line, and ride towards our left ; which a column was endeavoring to turn. This was the only officer on horseback during the day, and as he approached the rail-fence, I heard a number of our men observe, ‘ there ! there ! see that officer on horseback ; let us fire. ’ ‘ No, not yet ; wait until he gets to that little knoll — now ! ’ — when they fired and he instantly fell dead from his horse. It proved to be Major Pitcairn, a distinguished officer.

“ The fire of the enemy was so badly directed, I should presume that forty-nine balls out of fifty passed from one to six feet over our heads ; for I noticed an apple-tree,

some paces in the rear, which had scarcely a ball in it from the trunk and ground as high as a man's head, while the trunk and branches above were literally cut to pieces.

"I commanded a full company in action, and had only one man killed and five wounded, which was a full average of the loss we sustained, excepting those who fell while sallying from the redoubt, when it was stormed by the British column.

"Our total loss in killed was eighty-eight, and as well as I can recollect, upward of two hundred wounded. Our platoon officers carried fuses.

"In the course of the action, after firing away what ammunition I had, I walked to the higher ground to the right, in rear of the redoubt, with an expectation of procuring from some of the dead or wounded men who lay there, a supply. While in that situation, I saw at some distance a dead man lying near a small locust tree. As he appeared to be much better dressed than our men generally were, I asked a man who was passing me, if he knew who it was. He replied, 'It is Dr. WARREN.'

"I did not personally know Dr. Warren, but was acquainted with his public character. He had been recently appointed a general in our service, but had not taken command. He was President of the Provincial Congress then sitting at Watertown, and having heard that there would probably be an action, had come to share in whatever might happen, in the character of a volunteer, and was unfortunately killed early in the action. His death was a severe misfortune to his friends and country. Pos-

terity will appreciate his worth and do honor to his memory. He is immortalized as a patriot, who gloriously fell in defence of freedom.

“The number of our troops in action, as near as I was able to ascertain, did not exceed fifteen hundred. The force of the British at the commencement of the action, was estimated at about the same number, but they were frequently reinforced. Had our ammunition held out, or had we been supplied with only fifteen or twenty rounds, I have no doubt that we should have killed and wounded the greatest part of their army and compelled the remainder to have laid down their arms; for it was with the greatest difficulty that they were brought up the last time. Our fire was so deadly, particularly to the officers, that it would have been impossible to have resisted it, but for a short time longer.

“I did not see a man quit his post during the action, and do not believe a single soldier who was brought into the field, fled, until the whole army was obliged to retreat for want of powder and ball.

“The total loss of the British was about twelve hundred; upward of five hundred killed, and between six and seven hundred wounded. The Welsh fusileers suffered most severely; they came into action five hundred strong, and all were killed or wounded but eighty-three.

“I will mention an extraordinary circumstance to show how far the temporary reputation of a man may affect the minds of all classes of society.

“General Putnam had entered our army at the commencement of the revolutionary war, with such a uni-

versal popularity as can scarcely now be conceived, even by those who THEN felt the whole force of it; and no one can at this time offer any satisfactory reasons why he was held in such high estimation.

“In the battle of Bunker’s Hill he took post *on the declivity toward Charlestown Neck*; where I saw him on horseback as we passed on to Breed’s Hill, with Col. Gerrish by his side. I heard the gallant Col. Prescott, (who commanded in the redoubt) observe after the war, at the table of his Excellency, James Bowdoin, then Governor of this Commonwealth, ‘that he sent three messengers during the battle to Gen. Putnam, requesting him to come forward and take the command, there being no general officer present, and the relative rank of the Colonel not having been settled; but that he received no answer, and his whole conduct was such, both during the action and the retreat, that he ought to have been shot.’ He remained at or near the top of Bunker Hill until the retreat, with Col. Gerrish by his side; I saw them together when we retreated. He not only continued at that distance himself during the whole of the action, but had a force with him nearly as large as that engaged. No reinforcement of men or ammunition was sent to our assistance; and, instead of attempting to cover the retreat of those who had expended their last shot in the face of the enemy, he retreated in company with Col. Gerrish, and his whole force, without discharging a single musket. But, what is still more astonishing, Col. Gerrish was arrested for *cowardice, tried, cashiered, and universally execrated*; while not a word was said



against the conduct of Gen. Putnam, *whose extraordinary popularity* alone saved him, not only from trial, but even from censure. Col. Gerrish commanded a regiment, and should have been at its head. His regiment was not in action, although ordered ; but as he was in the suit of the general, and appeared to be in the situation of adjutant-general, why was he not directed by Putnam to join it, or the regiment sent into action under the senior officer present with it ?

“ When Gen. Putnam’s ephemeral and unaccountable popularity subsided or faded away, and the minds of the people were released from the shackles of a delusive trance, the circumstances relating to Bunker Hill were viewed and talked of in a very different light ; and the selection of the unfortunate Col. Gerrish as a scape-goat considered as a mysterious and inexplicable event.

“ I have no private feeling to gratify by making this statement in relation to Gen. *Putnam*, as I never had any intercourse with him, and was only in the army where he was present, for a few months ; but at this late period, I conceive it a duty to give a fair and impartial account of one of the most important battles during the war of independence, and all the circumstances connected with it so far as I had the means of being correctly informed.

“ It is a duty I owe to posterity, and the character of those brave officers who bore a share in the hardships of the revolution.

“ Nothing like discipline had entered our army at that time. Gen. Ward, then commander-in-chief, *remained*

*in his quarters in Cambridge*, and apparently took no interest or part in the transactions of the day.

"No general officer, except *Putnam*, appeared in sight, nor did any officer assume the command, undertake to form the troops, or give any orders, that I heard except Col. Stark, who directed his regiment to reserve their fire on the retreat of the enemy, until they advanced again. Every platoon officer was engaged in discharging his own musket and left his men to fire as they pleased, but never without a sure aim at some particular object, which was more destructive than any mode which could have been adopted with troops who were not inured to discipline, and never had been in battle, but were still familiar with the use of arms, from boyhood, and each having his peculiar manner of loading and firing, which had been practised upon for years with the same gun ; any attempt to control them by uniformity and system, would have rendered their fires infinitely less fatal to the enemy. Not an officer or soldier of the continental troops engaged was in uniform, but were in the plain and ordinary dress of citizens ; nor was there an officer on horse-back. (Signed)

H. DEARBORN."

It was attempted to invalidate this account, at the time, by a publication by Col. Daniel Putnam, son of the General, and the statements of Colonels John Trumbull and Thomas Grosvenor, were given, as sufficient to lessen or destroy the weight of Dearborn's statement, so far as it implicated Gen. Putnam, for all agreed to the

accuracy of the account in every other particular. Col. Putnam wrote and expressed himself with much warmth; calling Dearborn hard names, and denouncing him as a disgraced General and base slanderer. Unfortunately for the truth of history, it was a time of great political excitement, Gen. Dearborn being at the time the Democratic candidate for Governor of Massachusetts, and General John Brooks the opposing or Federal candidate. The writer, at the time was a voter in that state, and for two successive years deposited his vote in favor of Brooks, who both years obtained the election. He is not sensible of having any predilection in favor of Dearborn, either personally or politically, neither has he the least objection to him or his statement in itself; the truth being the only object in such a case, and the only issue before the public. Colonel Putnam further stated with great confidence, that the conduct of his father was such during the war, as to secure the entire confidence of Congress, Washington and the public. His pamphlet is not now before me and I write from recollection.

In support of the charges against Dearborn and in defence of his father, he published the following letters, from Colonels Trumbull and Grosvenor. "In the summer of 1786, I became acquainted in London, with Col. John Small, of the British army, who had served in America many years, and had known General Putnam intimately during the war of Canada from 1756 to 1763. From him I had the two following anecdotes respecting the battle of Bunker Hill; I shall nearly repeat his words; looking at the picture which I had almost com-

pleted, he said : " I do not like the situation in which you have placed my old friend Putnam ; you have not done him justice. I wish you would alter that part of your picture, and introduce a circumstance which actually happened, and which I can never forget. When the British troops advanced the second time to the attack of the redoubt, I, with other officers was in front of the line to encourage the men ; we had advanced very near the works undisturbed, when an irregular fire, like a feu-de-joie, was poured in upon us ; it was cruelly fatal. The troops fell back, and when I glanced my eye to the right and left, I saw not one officer standing ; I looked to the right and left, and saw several young men leveling their pieces at me ; I knew their excellence as marksmen, and considered myself gone. At that moment my old friend Putnam rushed forward, and striking up the muzzles of their pieces with his sword, cried out, " For God's sake, my lads, dont fire at that man—I love him as I do my brother." We were so near each other that I heard his words distinctly. He was obeyed ; I bowed, thanked him, and walked away unmolested.

At the moment when the troops succeeded in carrying the redoubt, and the Americans were in full retreat, Gen. Howe, (who had been hurt by a spent ball which bruised his ancle,) was leaning on my arm. He called suddenly to me : do you see that elegant young man who has just fallen ? Do you know him ? I looked to the spot towards which he pointed—Good God, sir, I believe it is my friend Warren ! Leave me then instantly—run—keep off the troops, save him if possible ! I flew to the



spot, "my dear friend," I said to him, "I hope you are not badly hurt;" he looked up, seemed to recollect me, smiled and died! A musket ball had passed through the upper part of his head.

JOHN TRUMBULL."

"DANIEL PUTNAM, Esq."

In addition to the above, the following letter from Judge Thomas Grosvenor, of Pomfret, addressed to Col. Putnam son of the General, was published to repel the statement of General Dearborn. "Being under the command of Gen. Putnam, part of our regiment and a much larger number of Massachusetts' troops under Col. Prescott were ordered to march, on the evening of the sixteenth of June, 1775, to Breed's Hill, where under the immediate superintendence of Gen. Putnam, ground was broken and a redoubt formed. On the following day, the seventeenth, dispositions were made to deter the advance of the enemy, as there was reason to believe an immediate attack was intended. Gen. Putnam during the period was extremely active, and directed principally the operations. All were animated, and their General inspired confidence by his example. The British army having made dispositions for landing at Morton's Point, were covered by the fire, shot and shells from Copp's Hill, in Boston, which it had opened on our redoubt early in the morning, and continued the greatest part of the day. At this moment a detachment of four lieutenants (of which I was one) and one hundred and twenty men, selected the previous day from General



Putnam's regiment, under Captain Knowlton, were, by the General, ordered to take post at a rail fence on the left of the breast work, that ran north from the redoubt to the bottom of Breed's Hill. This order was promptly executed, and our detachment, in advancing to the post, took one rail fence and placed it against the other, (as a partial cover,) nearly parallel with the line of the breast work, and extended our left nearly to Mystic river. Each man was furnished with one pound of gunpowder and forty-eight balls. The ammunition was received, however, prior to marching to Breed's Hill. In this position our detachment remained until a second division of British troops landed, when they commenced a fire of their field artillery of several rounds, and particularly against the rail fence; then formed in columns, advanced to the attack, displayed in line at about the distance of musket shot, and commenced firing. At this instant our whole line opened upon the enemy, and so precise and fatal was our fire, that in the course of a short time they gave way and retired in disorder out of musket shot, leaving before us many killed and wounded. There was but a short respite on the part of the British; as their lines were soon filled up and led against us; when they were met as before, and forced back with great loss. On reinforcements joining the enemy, they made a direct advance on the redoubt, and being successful, which our brave Captain Knowlton perceiving, ordered a retreat of his men, in which he was sustained by two companies under the command of Captains Clark and Chester. The loss of our detachment, I presume,

was nearly equal. Of my own immediate command of thirty men and one subaltern, there were eleven killed and wounded ; among the latter was myself, though not so severely as to prevent my retiring. At the rail fence there was not posted any corps save our own under Knowlton, when the firing commenced ; nor did I hear of any other being there till long after the action. Other troops, it was said, were ordered to join, but refused doing so. Of the officers on the ground, the most active within my observation, were General Putnam, Colonel Prescott and Captain Knowlton ; but no doubt there were many more, equally brave and meritorious, who must naturally have escaped the eye of one attending to his own immediate command."

The subjoined letter from Washington to Putnam, taken from Humphrey's *Life of Putnam*, seems to have been in answer to a letter of Putnam's to him, the design of which was to obtain Washington's opinion and influence to secure his pay when not in service. This letter was published by Col. Putnam to show the entire confidence Washington always reposed in Gen. Putnam his father, and thereby lessen the weight of Dearborn's statement.

*" Head Quarters, 2d June, 1783."*

DEAR SIR,

Your favor of the 20th May I received with much pleasure. For I can assure you that among the many worthy and meritorious officers with whom I have

had the happiness to be connected in the service during the course of this war, and from whose cheerful assistance [and advice I have received much support and confidence] in the various and trying vicissitudes of a complicated contest, *the name of Putnam is not forgotten*. The Secretary of War who is now here, informs me that you have ever been considered as entitled to full pay since your absence from the field, and that you will still be considered in that light until the close of the war; at which period you will be equally entitled to the same emoluments of half pay or commutation as other officers of your rank. The same opinion is also given by the paymaster-general who is now with the army."

The above extract from Washington's letter, is all that expresses any opinion of Putnam; and that is exceedingly equivocal. It may be here noticed that Mr. Peabody, in a recent life of Putnam, has interpolated the words in the above letter inclosed in brackets; a very significant alteration, it might have been the result of accident. Col. Grosvenor, a gentleman of high standing, has no doubt given a true account of what he saw. Having been called on to contradict Dearborn, it may be presumed he would have done so, if truth would have permitted. His history so far as it alludes to General Putnam, was all in the forenoon, two or three hours before the action commenced, for Stark with whom Dearborn marched, did not arrive at Breed's Hill

more than half an hour before the action commenced, nearly or quite three o'clock in the afternoon. Grosvenor does not say he saw Putnam in the action, although willing it should so be believed. No part of his statement, bears favorably or unfavorably on Dearborn, directly, but is strong negative testimony in support of it. Washington's opinion of Putnam will be noticed hereafter.

After the above statements were published, and many anonymous publications, in the prints of the day, tending to keep up a strong feeling against General Dearborn ; he caused to be published in a Boston paper, what follows :—

“As it appears from various publications that *attempts* have been made to invalidate the account, which I have given of the battle of Bunker Hill, and thus to produce an excitement against me, not warranted by facts, I have been induced to have the following documents made public. If there are any persons of *candid* and *unprejudiced minds*, who have *conceived* there were some grounds for doubting the general correctness of my observations, in relation to that memorable event, the concurring declarations of many respectable characters may afford them satisfaction.”

H. DEARBORN.

*Boston, June 10th, 1818.*

## GEN. MICHAEL M'CLARY'S LETTER.

" *Epsom, May 10, 1818.*

" DEAR SIR—

" Your letter of the 1st instant I received yesterday, and a few days previously, I saw in the New Hampshire Patriot the account published by your father of what is generally called Bunker Hill battle, which, to the best of my recollection, is correct.

" I was in the battle from its commencement to the end, and have no recollection of seeing Gen. Putnam in or near it. I was the principal part of the time the action continued near Col. Stark, who commanded the regiment to which I belonged, and on our retreat from Breed's Hill, in ascending Bunker Hill, I well remember seeing Gen. Putnam there on his horse, with a spade in his hand.

" Being an officer in the company under your father's command, I had an opportunity of knowing the circumstances generally attending the battle ; and if Gen. Putnam had been there [that is, taken any part in it] I should have known it.

" I am, dear sir, &c.

" MICHAEL McCLARY,

" H. A. S. DEARBORN."

## GEN. B. PIERCE'S LETTER.

" *Hillsboro, N. H., May 17, 1818.*

" MUCH RESPECTED GENERAL—

" I have read your account of the battle of Bunker Hill, and consider it to be more like *the thing itself*



than any statement I have seen. I went on to the hill about 11 o'clock, A. M., on the 17th. When I arrived at the summit of Bunker Hill, I saw there two pieces of cannon, and two or three soldiers standing by them, who said they belonged to Capt. Callender's company, and that the officers had run away. Gen. Putnam sat there upon a horse. I saw nobody else but him and the before mentioned soldiers. The general *requested* our company (which was commanded by Capt. John Ford, of Chelmsford, Massachusetts) to take these cannon down to the lines; which they refused to do, saying they had no knowledge of the use of artillery, but were ready to fight with their own arms. Capt. Ford then addressed his company in a very animated strain, which had the desired effect, and they seized the ropes, and soon drew the cannon to the rail fence.

"I think I saw Gen. Putnam at that place, looking for something he had lost. I did not hear him give any orders, or assume any command, except at the top of Bunker Hill, when I was going to the field of action. I remained at the rail fence until all the powder and ball were spent. I had a full view of the movements of the enemy, and I think your statement of the order of the day, and of the two contending armies, correct, and cannot be denied with the semblance of truth. Excuse an old soldier.

"I am, sir, &c.,

"B. PIERCE.

"Maj. Gen. HENRY DEARBORN."

## LETTER OF DR. THOMAS KITTRIDGE, OF ANDOVER.

*"Boston, June 18, 1818.*

"SIR—

"I received your letter of the 8th instant in due season, in which you request me to answer certain questions respecting the battle on Bunker Hill, so called.

"I was surgeon in Frye's regiment, and marched with the troops in the evening of the 16th of June, 1775, which consisted of three regiments, according to the best of my recollection—Frye's, Prescott's and Bridge's.\*—Col. Prescott was considered commander of the whole detachment. We arrived at the hill late in the evening, and the troops immediately commenced throwing up works for our defence. \* \* \* \* I left the hill with the first who was wounded, passed over Charlestown Neck, where I proceeded to dress his wounds. You ask whether I saw Gen. Putnam on that day, and where? I saw him only once, as I came off, at the foot of the lower hill, between where the battle was and Charlestown Neck. He was under a tree, with, as I supposed, about thirty or forty men. I made a halt, when I came against him, of three or four minutes; and while I was there, I heard Gen. Putnam request some of the men to go up to the fort and endeavor to get some of the in-

---

\* "According to Col. Swett, there were attached to this expedition, in addition to the above, one hundred and twenty men of Gen. Putnam's regiment, and one company of artillery, making in all about one thousand men.

*trenching tools.* I immediately left them, went over the Neck, and there continued dressing the wounded until the engagement was over.

“ I am, sir, &c.,

“ THOMAS KITTRIDGE.

“ Gen. H. A. S. DEARBORN.”

“ I, Samuel Lawrence, of Groton, Esquire, testify and say, that I was at the battle of Bunker Hill, (so called) in Col. Wm. Prescott’s regiment ; that I marched with the regiment to the point on Breed’s Hill, which was fixed on for a redoubt ; that I assisted in throwing up the work, and in forming a redoubt, under Col. Prescott, who directed the whole of this operation. The work was begun about nine o’clock in the evening of June 16, 1775. I was there the whole time, and continued in the redoubt, or in the little fort, during the whole battle until the enemy came in and a retreat was ordered.

“ Gen. Putnam was not present either while the works were erecting, or during the battle. I could distinctly see the rail fence and the troops stationed there during the battle, but Gen. Putnam was not present as I saw. Just before the battle commenced, Gen. Warren came to the redoubt. He had on a blue coat, white waistcoat, and I think a cocked hat, but of this I am not certain. Col. Prescott advanced to him, said he was glad to see him, and hoped he would take the command. General Warren replied, ‘ No, he came to see the action, but not to take command ; that he was only a volunteer on that day.’ Afterwards I saw Gen. Warren shot ; I saw him

when the ball struck him, and from that time until he expired. No British officer was within forty or fifty rods of him, from the time the ball struck him until I saw he was dead.

“ (Signed) SAMUEL LAWRENCE.”

Sworn to before Sam'l. Dana, Justice of the Peace, &c.

“ I commanded a company of artillery from the town of Marblehead, attached to Col. Richard Gridley's regiment, stationed at Cambridge. About one o'clock in the afternoon of the 17th of June, 1775, I left Cambridge with my company, for Bunker's Hill. When about a quarter of a mile from the Colleges, I saw Gen. Putnam pass upon a horse towards the town of Cambridge, and in fifteen or twenty minutes I saw him pass in like manner towards Charlestown. When I arrived at Bunker's Hill, on the north-west side, I there saw Gen. Putnam dismounted, in company with several others. I halted my company, and went forward to select a station for my pieces, and on my return, saw Gen. Putnam as before; the American and English forces being then engaged. I proceeded on with my company, and soon after joined that part of the American force at the rail fence, towards Mystic river, the Americans commenced a general retreat. As I was descending the north-west side of Bunker's Hill, I again saw Gen. Putnam in the same place, putting his tent upon his horse. I asked him where I should retreat with the field-piece I had brought off; he replied to Cambridge, and I accordingly marched my company to Cambridge.

"In the month of May or June, 1795, being in the island of Guernsey, I had occasion in the course of business to call upon Maj. (alias Col. Small,) the governor. After closing my business with him, he remarked that my countenance was not new to him, and inquired where he had seen me. I replied, that it must have been at Col. Ingersoll's tavern, in Boston—and that I had once been opposed to him in action. He immediately entered into a free and general conversation on the battle of Bunker's Hill ; but he made no inquiry after Gen. Putnam, nor did he in any way, either directly or indirectly, allude to him, either as a friend or an officer.

"SAMUEL R. TREVETT.

"Boston, June 2, 1818."

#### AFFIDAVIT OF ROBERT BRADFORD WILKINS.

"I, Robert B. Wilkins, of Concord, county of Rockingham, State of New Hampshire, do testify and say, that I acted as a private soldier in the battle of Breed's Hill, otherwise called the battle of Bunker's Hill, on the 17th of June, 1775 ; that I was attached to Capt. Levi Spaulding's company, of Col. Jas. Reed's regiment. That I was on that day stationed at Charlestown, below the Neck and on the main street ; that our company proceeded from thence on to Bunker's Hill, over the hollow and on to Breed's Hill ; that after our company arrived at the works, near Mystic river, I was sent back on an errand, by the captain, to the house where we had been stationed, and on returning by a route nearer to the Neck, than that we first passed, I saw Gen. Putnam with



Col. Gerrish, as near as I could judge one hundred rods from the line and troops I had left ; that the firing with small arms commenced after I returned the second time ; that in the action the enemy were three times repulsed ; that in the interval between the second and third repulse, I received a severe wound from a musket-ball in my right elbow-joint, for which wound I have since received a pension from the government of the United States ; that I then left the field of battle just before the retreat of the Americans from the fort, and passed on to Bunker's Hill, where I found Gen. Putnam and Col. Gerrish in nearly the same place where I first saw them ; that I was then almost exhausted from the loss of blood ; that Col. Gerrish gave me some refreshment and bound a handkerchief around my arm at the place of my wound, and sent two men to assist me over the Neck, who left me before I had cleared the Neck, and I fell and lay on the ground, until nearly all the Americans had retreated from the hill, when I was helped off. I served from the commencement to the close of the revolutionary war, and acted successively as a private, a sergeant, ensign and lieutenant.

“ ROBERT B. WILKINS.”

Sworn to before Samuel Greene, Justice of the Peace.  
May, 30, 1818.

#### REV. DR. WM. BENTLEY'S STATEMENT.

“ *Salem*, May 20, 1818.

“ I was with General Stark on the 31st of May, 1810. I always had a deep interest in the man, and usually

kept a notice of the subject of our conversation. I found him in great good humor, and soon upon his old war stories, which I did not take care minutely to preserve, because Maj. Caleb Stark had told me he was collecting every thing worthy of the public eye, and to be published after his father's decease, and in due honor of his memory. As among other objects, I intended to get a likeness, and was uncertain of success, among the maps, prints, and papers I carried him, were some portraits, and among them was one of Gen. Putnam. I recollect upon the sight of the head of General Putnam he said, 'My champlain,' as he called me, you know my opinion of that man. Had he done his duty, he would have decided the fate of his country in the first action. He then proceeded to describe to me the scene of action and the '*pen*,' as he called the enclosed works, and breast-works, and gave his reason for not entering it, and the want of judgment in the works. He then told me where he saw General Putnam and what was done on the occasion, and his remarks were as severe as his genius and the sentiments of ardent patriotism could make them. As Gen. Stark always used the same language on the subject, it will be recollected by many of his friends.

"WILLIAM BENTLEY."

CERTIFICATE OF THE REV. DANIEL CHAPLIN, D.D., OF  
GROTON, AND REV. JOHN BULLARD, OF PEPPERELL.

"This may certify the public, that we whose names we have given, were in the habits of intimacy with Col. W. Prescott, of Pepperell, a man of the strictest integrity,

during most of the period after he left the revolutionary army until his death ; that at sundry times in conversation with him about the war, particularly about the battle of Bunker Hill, so called, he uniformly told us, that Major Gen. Warren came to the fort on Breed's Hill, which had been formed the night preceding, a little before the British made an attack on the works ; that he, Col. Prescott, said to Gen. Warren, ' I am happy to see you, General,' or using words to the same effect, ' for you will now take command, and I will obey your orders and am relieved.' Said Gen. Warren to him, in reply, ' I have no command here, Col. Prescott ; I am a volunteer ; I came to learn actual service.' Prescott said, ' I wish, then, you would look at the works we have thrown up, and give your opinion.' Warren replied, ' You are better acquainted with military matters than I am.' After which they immediately parted, and met not again. Col. Prescott further informed us repeatedly, that when a retreat was ordered and commenced, he was descending the hill, he met Gen. Putnam and said to him, ' why did you not support me, General, with your men, as I had reason to expect, according to agreement ?' Putnam answered, ' I could not *drive* the dogs up.' Prescott pointedly said to him, ' If you could not *drive* them up, you might have *led* them up.' We have good reason to believe further, from declarations of some of our parishioners—men of respectability, whose veracity cannot be doubted, who belonged to Col. Prescott's regiment, and were present through the whole service, that Gen. Putnam was not on Breed's Hill the night preceding, or on

that day, except that just before the attack was made, he might have gone to the fort and ordered the tools to be carried off, that they might not fall into the hands of the enemy in the event of his carrying the works, and holding the ground; and that he and his men, with Colonel Gerrish, remained on the side of Bunker Hill towards the Neck during the whole action.

“(Signed) DANIEL CHAPLIN,  
“Groton, June 5, 1818. JOHN BULLARD.”

STATEMENT OF THE HON. ABEL PARKER, JUDGE  
OF PROBATE.

“As I was in the battle on Breed’s Hill, otherwise called Bunker’s Hill, on the 17th day of June, 1775, and there received one ball through my leg, another having passed through my clothes, all accounts of that battle which I have seen published, have been to me extremely interesting. But I have never seen any account which I considered in any degree correct, until the one by Gen. Dearborn. On perusing that account with the utmost attention, I could discover but one mistake, and that related to his assertion, ‘that there was not a man that flinched,’ or to that effect, for his narrative is not now before me, and even in that case, I believe the General’s assertion may be strictly true, if his meaning be confined to the time after his arrival on the hill. Previous to that, there were many who left the ground at the fort, particularly at the landing of the British troops; but after the commencement of the battle with small arms, I know of no man’s leaving his post,



until the order to retreat was given by Col. Prescott. But notwithstanding the correctness of Gen. Dearborn's description of that battle, some persons seem to be much exasperated by it, in particular as to what he asserted in regard to Gen. Putnam. As long as they confined themselves to mere declamation, without bringing forward any evidence to disprove the General's assertion, I deemed it unnecessary for me to appear in vindication of the General's statement. But on perusing a letter from Col. Trumbull to Col. *Putnam*, wherein mention is made of a conversation with Col. Small in London, I concluded, notwithstanding my aversion to take any part in a newspaper discussion, that to remain any longer silent, would be absolutely criminal. I shall, therefore, in as concise a manner as possible, state what I know relating to that memorable battle. Immediately after the battle of Lexington, I engaged in the service of my country, in Capt. John Nutting's company, in the regiment commanded by Col. Wm. *Prescott*. Both of these officers belonged to the town of *Peperell*, where I then lived. I was at this time a little more than twenty-two years of age. On the 16th day of June following, Col. *Prescott's* regiment with two or three others, were ordered to march and take possession of Bunker's Hill. On our arrival at the place called Charlestown neck, a halt was made, and Capt. Nutting's company, with ten of the Connecticut troops, were detached to proceed into Charlestown as a guard; the remainder marched to the hill, which in fact was Breed's, and not Bunker's Hill, where they commenced building



a small fort. In the morning, not far from sun-rising, the alarm was fired from the British vessel lying in the river. Sometime after this, Nutting's company left the town, and marched to join the regiment on the hill.—When we arrived there, the fort was in considerable forwardness, and the troops commenced throwing up the breast-work mentioned by Gen. Dearborn. We had not long been employed in that work, before the cannon shot from a hill in Boston, and the vessels lying in the river were poured in upon us in great profusion. However, the work progressed until it would answer the purpose for which it was designed. But the firing from the British artillery continued with unabated fury. Sometime before this, there was brought to the fort several brass field pieces, one of which was actually fired towards Boston ; but the ball did not reach the town. It had this effect, however, on the British, that it made them double their diligence in firing upon us. In the time of this heavy fire, I, for the first time that day, saw Gen. *Putnam* standing with others, under cover of the north wall of the fort, where, I believe, he remained until the British troops made their appearance in their boats. At this time the artillery was withdrawn from the fort, but by whose orders I know not, and Gen. *Putnam*, at, or near the same time, left the fort. The removing of the artillery, and Gen. *Putnam's* departure, took place a little before, (if my memory be correct) the New Hampshire troops made their appearance on the hill. I saw them when they arrived, and witnessed their dexterity in throwing up their breast-work of rails and hay.

“ When the British first made their attack with small arms, I was at the breast work, where I remained until I received my wound from the party who flanked it ; I then went to the fort, where I remained until the order to retreat was given by Col. Prescott. After my arrival at the fort I had a perfect opportunity of viewing the operations of the day, and noticed Col. P. as the only person who took upon him any command. He frequently ordered the men from one side to the other, in order to defend that part which was prest hardest by the enemy ; and I was within a few yards of him, when the order to retreat was given ; and I affirm, that at that time Gen. Putnam was not in the fort, neither had he been there at any time after my entering the same ; and I have no hesitation in declaring, that the story told by Col. Small to Col. Trumbull, concerning Gen. Putnam’s saving him from the fire of our men at that time, is altogether unfounded.

ABEL PARKER.”

“ *Jeffrey, N. H., May 27, 1818.*”

A more dignified and calm appeal to the public in vindication of the correctness of his statement, bearing on the face of it, a consciousness of having narrated the truth in its simplicity, is rarely to be found, and would have done credit to his old friend and commander, Washington. So complete and satisfactory was this vindication, from gentlemen of all political bearings, and of so high standing in society for veracity, that it has precluded any attempt to contradict their statement from the day it was given to the present time.

They all give their statements, without dictation, writing separately, at different times and places. They were not invited by public advertisements to appear to give testimony ; nor were agents employed to travel the country to get up testimony. That the opposition to Dearborn's account arose, in some measure, from the political feelings of the day, may be presumed, from the circumstance, that General Heath in his account of Breed's Hill battle, published in 1798, says :—

“Perhaps there never was a better fought battle than this, all things considered, and too much praise can never be bestowed on the conduct of Col. William Prescott, who, notwithstanding any thing that may have been said, *was the proper commanding officer*, at the redoubt, and nobly acted his part as such, during the whole action. Just before the action began, General Putnam came to the redoubt, and told Colonel Prescott that the entrenching tools must be sent off, or they would be lost ; the Colonel replied, that if he sent any of the men away with the tools, not one of them would return, to this the General answered, ‘they shall every man return.’ A large party was then sent away with the tools, and not one of them returned ; in this instance the Colonel was the best judge of human nature. In the time of action, Colonel Prescott observed the brave General Warren was near the works ; he immediately stepped up to him, and asked him if he had any orders to give him. The General replied that he had none, that he exercised no command there, ‘the command,’ said the General, ‘is yours.’ Heath's account appeared

thirty years before Dearborn's in which he declares Prescott commanded during the whole action ; and was never contradicted. He further places Putnam in an awkward situation for a general, absorbed with the care of entrenching tools, and depriving Prescott of a large party, it is said at least two hundred men. This party with eighteen or twenty rounds, would in all probability, have given Prescott what he most richly deserved, victory.—General Wilkinson in his memoirs, published two years before Dearborn's, in giving an account of this battle says, 'After the third repulse of the light infantry, and whilst the attack was carried on against the redoubt, Stark's men behind the post and rail fence near the Mystic were unassailed and unoccupied, and the scene near the redoubt being obscured by the smoke, they were induced to retreat reluctantly after the work was carried. If they had been thrown forward, when the light infantry finally gave way, to attack Sir Williams Howe's right flank and rear, the issue of this conflict might have proved unfortunate for him; or if General Putnam had moved up with Colonel Gerrish and the men who remained stationary within six hundred yards of the combat, which lasted an hour and an half, the triumph of the provincials would have been decisive, and those of the British corps who were not killed must have surrendered, which would have probably terminated the contest and prevented the dis-severment of the British empire ; but I understand from high authority, that it was in vain that Colonel Prescott sent messenger after messenger to entreat General



Putnam to come to his succor ; he rode about Bunker's Hill, while the battle raged under his eye, with a number of entrenching tools slung across his horse, but did not advance a step, and was passed, with Colonel Gerrish by his side, by Stark and Dearborn, as they retreated, near the spot where they saw him when they advanced ; and for this conduct Colonel Prescott never ceased to reprobate the General."

This high authority quoted by Wilkinson, was probably Colonel Stark, for he says he had the details of the battle from him on the field, the 17th of March 1776, the day the British left that post, when he observed "the dead lay as thick as sheep in a fold," before the rail fence. Heath and Wilkinson having been before the public, the one nearly fifty years, and the other twenty, uncontradicted and acquiesced in, while Dearborn was attacked in the most violent manner, and personal abuse heaped upon him, makes it more than probable that the political excitement of the day, or other sinister views and objects, had an undue weight.

In every controversy about the truth of history, or the conduct of an individual in exalted station, on any particular occasion, and that controversy of recent origin, it is prudent and safe to call in the aid of authorities of earlier date, and who lived and wrote, at or near the time, the event in controversy happened. On referring to Marshall, Ramsey, Lendrum, General H. Lee, and other respectable historians, it is found they do not mention the name of Putnam, as taking any part in the



action. Gordon, who resided in the vicinity of the scene of action, and published his history in four volumes, as early as 1787, makes Prescott the hero of the day, and adds, Putnam was "here and there."

Botta in his "History of the War of Independence of the United States of America," says, "The troops of Massachusetts commanded by Col. Prescott, occupied Charlestown, the redoubt, and part of the trench; those of Connecticut, commanded by Capt. Knowlton, and those of New Hampshire, commanded by Colonel Stark, the rest of the trench; and General Putnam was on the hill above to superintend the action." Humphries in his life of Putnam, does not place him in the action, but says he was active in the retreat. Humphries is careful to inform his readers, that the facts in this Life he received from Gen. Putnam's own mouth, and it must appear singular, that he did not mention to his biographer his being present and in command on such an occasion. Gen. Dearborn's declaration, that Prescott commanded in the redoubt and Stark at the rail fence, and nothing but musket balls prevented General Putnam from reinforcing them, produced great indignation; but perhaps not greater than the following: "When General Putnam's ephemeral and unaccountable popularity subsided or faded away, and the minds of the people were released from the shackles of a delusive trance, the circumstances relating to Bunker Hill, were *viewed and talked of* in a *very different light*, and the selection of the unfortunate Col. *Gerrish* as a *scape-goat*, considered as a *mysterious and inexplicable event*." To this Col. Putnam and

others gave a full and flat denial, and published Washington's letter to Putnam already cited, in confirmation of their assertion, that his popularity never did *subside or fade away*. In justice to Gen. Dearborn, the following letters and orders from Gen. Washington and others are given, that the reader may be more fully in possession of the facts, as to the above declaration of Dearborn.

Extract of a letter from John Adams to his wife, while member of Congress, and in session at Baltimore, and when the business of the army was especially before that body, for on the day the letter was written, nine individuals were appointed Brigadier Generals, viz. Poor, Patterson, Wayne, Varnum, De Haas, Weedon, Muhlenburg, Cadwallader and Woodford.

“*Baltimore, 21st February, 1777.*”

I sincerely wish we could hear more from General Heath. Many persons are extremely dissatisfied with numbers of the general officers of the highest rank. I don't mean the Commander-in-Chief, his character is justly very high, but Putnam, Spencer and Heath, are thought by very few to be capable of the high commands they hold. We hear of none of their heroic deeds in arms. I wish they would all resign.”

About the same time Robert R. Livingston, then Chancellor of New-York, wrote Washington. “Your Excellency,” said he, “is not ignorant of the extent of Gen. Putnam's *capacity* and *diligence*; and how well soever they may qualify him for this important command, [the Highlands,] the prejudices to which his

*imprudent lenity to the disaffected, and too great intercourse with the enemy*, have given rise, have greatly injured his influence. How far the loss of Fort Montgomery and the subsequent ravages of the enemy are to be attributed to him, I will not venture to say; as this will necessarily be determined by a court of inquiry, whose determination I would not anticipate. Unfortunately for him, the current of popular opinion in this and the neighboring states, and so far as I can learn in the troops under his command, runs strongly against him. For my own part, I sincerely lament that his *patriotism* will not suffer him to take that repose to which his age and past services justly entitle him."

Gov. Clinton also wrote pressinglly to Washington requesting the removal of Putnam from the command in the Highlands.

In 1777, Congress appointed Gov. Clinton a general officer in the army of the United States, and gave him the command on the North river, because as President Hancock, in a letter to Clinton says, "an *active and vigilant* officer was required at that post." But Clinton's business as govenor, was so pressing, that he was compelled to decline the appointment, which continued Putnam in the command till March, 1778. In the latter part of 1777, after the surrender of Burgoyne's army, Washington was so desirous to be reinforced, in the vicinity of Philadelphia, by troops on the Hudson under Gates and Putnam, that he sent Hamilton, his aid, to hasten their march, for his letters to them had not had the desired effect. Hamilton did not find either of those

Generals disposed to comply with Washington's orders, given through him. He addressed many letters to Washington on this subject, and in one dated November 12, 1777, he says, "By a letter of yesterday, Gen. Poor informs me he would certainly march this morning. I must do him the justice to say, he appears solicitous to join you, and that I believe the past delay is not owing to any fault of his, *but is wholly chargeable to Gen. Putnam.* Indeed Sir, I owe it to the service to say, *that every part of this gentleman's conduct is marked with blunders and negligence, and gives general disgust.*" Again Hamilton says, "I doubt whether he will attend to any thing I shall say, *notwithstanding it comes in the shape of a positive order.* Col. Hamilton had the satisfaction of receiving a letter from Washington of November 15, 1777, in which he says, "Dear Sir—I have duly received your several favors from the time you left me to that of the 12th instant. I approve entirely of all the steps you have taken, and have only to wish that the exertions of those you have had to deal with had kept pace with your zeal and good intentions." Putnam's disobedience of the orders of Washington, which prevented him from even attempting the capture of Howe, which he had determined to effect, deeply affected his mind; and we find in a letter dated Valley Forge, of March 6, 1778, he thus expresses himself in reference to the command of Rhode Island. "They also know with more certainty than I do, what will be the determination of Congress respecting Gen. Putnam; and of course whether the appointment of him to such



a command as that at Rhode Island would fall within their views. It being incumbent on me to observe, that with such *materials as I am furnished, the work must go on—whether well or ill is another matter.* If, therefore, *he and others are not laid aside, they must be placed where they can least injure the service.*" In a letter of Washington to Putnam, dated, "Valley Forge, 16th March, 1778," he says, "Gen. McDougall is to take command of the posts in the Highlands. My reason for making this change is owing to the prejudices of the people, which whether *well or ill grounded*, must be indulged; and I should think myself wanting in justice to the public and candor towards you, were I to continue you in a command, after I have been, almost in direct terms, informed that the people of the State of New-York will not render the necessary support and assistance, while you remain at the head of that department. When the inquiry is finished I desire that you will return to Connecticut and superintend the forwarding on the new levies with the greatest expedition." But Putnam reluctantly obeyed this order, for he soon expressed a wish to join the main army, as may be gathered from Washington to him of April 29th, 1778. "I expect in a few days a general plan of operations for the campaign will be settled; if *one similar* to that which you mention should be fixed upon, your assistance will be wanting in Connecticut to arrange and forward the militia, which we shall have occasion to draw from that state, and therefore I wish you to continue there till you hear from me." Similar and repeated opinions of Wash-



ington and Hamilton might be given, but it seems entirely unnecessary. The sole reason for which they are referred to, is to show that Dearborn's declaration that Putnam's "ephemeral and unaccountable popularity, did *subside* and *fade away*," notwithstanding what has been said to the contrary, is fully supported by the opinions and actions of Adams, Livingston, Washington and Hamilton. Gentlemen, whose opinions, heretofore, and in other cases, have been held in high estimation with their countrymen, and whose words have been justly considered truth.

All accounts previous to that of Dearborn's, which were many, give the command to Prescott, and were silent with regard to Putnam, or censured him. Anonymous writers have been numerous of later times, and their statements variant. Capt. Josiah Cleveland is made to say, "On the retreat, near the causeway, Putnam met with Colonels Gerrish and Poor, with their regiments, whom he reprimanded in the most indignant and fiery terms, for not coming to his support. They excused themselves by saying it was too dangerous to cross the causeway over Bunker's Hill. Putnam replied with an oath, that the balls didn't hit him, and they too might have escaped. These men were afterwards cashiered." Capt. Cleveland was eighty-seven years old, and did not sign this statement; but the editor of the Oswego advertiser says he told him this, and so published it. A sufficient answer to all this is, Colonel Poor was not within fifty-five miles of Bunker's Hill that day, unless Exeter, New Hampshire, is nearer; nor was he ever cashiered,

but died of a fever in 1780, and was buried at Hackensack, New Jersey ; and in the opinion of Washington, an officer of distinguished merit, who, as a citizen and soldier, had every claim to the esteem of his country."

Among the great variety of opinions expressed in regard to the degree of merit due the several actors in our revolutionary struggle, it is satisfactory to find some disposed to speak of them with calmness, candor, and personal knowledge. In a manuscript letter, now before me, of August, 1842, from a very intelligent gentleman, we have such an expression : " I lived in Pomfret, within three miles of Gen. Putnam, when he died, in 1790, and am very well acquainted with his public and private character. It is a common practice for all nations to represent all their commanders as invincible heroes. Putnam was so represented by some Americans, in April, 1775 ; while some of the enemy at that time said he was a mere wolf-catcher and Indian-hunter, who was hardly equal to command a company of grenadiers. During the battle on Breed's Hill, I believe Putnam was seen near the hill, urging men to go into the battle, but that he was chief of the time on Bunker's Hill, where there was no danger from the enemy's bullets ; that he showed an improper anxiety in the time of battle to save spades and pickaxes, I have no doubt. I think a full, correct and impartial history of the battle of Bunker Hill (such a one has not, I believe, yet been published,) would prove conclusively that General Putnam had not talents that fitted him to command an army. From the published accounts of the disastrous battle on Long Island,

by Marshall, Ramsey and others, and from an account of the battle I have had from Col. Knowlton's son, who was there, I have no doubt the chief misfortunes of the day may be attributed to the great want of military talents of the commander, Gen. Putnam. Daniel Putnam, (page 3) says : 'two days before the battle of Flatbush, in consequence of the sickness of that excellent officer, Gen. Green, who had commanded on Long Island, Gen. Putnam was ordered to the command of that post, and assisted in the arduous and complicated difficulties of that masterly retreat.' D. Putnam is the only person that I ever heard or read of, who asserted that Gen. Putnam assisted in that masterly retreat. I believe that General Putnam remained in his fortified camp, at Brooklyn, during the battle, while General Sullivan did the fighting without the lines, but he could not retrieve the blunders of Putnam. General Putnam was a plain, industrious, prudent farmer, and, I think, was a brave, honest man, but without talents or other qualifications to constitute a general. I believe it would be difficult at this time to offer any satisfactory reason why he was held in such high estimation by some of the Americans previous to the battle of Breed's Hill."

The writer of the above letter is still living, and wrote without expressing any wish that it should be considered or treated as confidential ; but not having an opportunity of seeing or writing him, on the occasion, before this goes to press, his name is not given at this time. From Col. Swett's history of this battle, and he was never suspected of being desirous of supporting Gen. Dearborn

in his declarations, being one of Gov. Brook's military family, we have the different declarations of Putnam and Prescott, previous to the battle. Putnam says: "From long experience he perfectly comprehended the character of the British; they would ultimately succeed and drive us from the works; but from the mode of attack they had chosen, it was in our power to do them infinite mischief, though we must be prepared for a brave and orderly retreat, when we could maintain our ground no longer." When preparation on the part of the British was apparent to attack the works thrown up by Prescott, and the men felt and expressed a wish to leave them, having worked all night, and spent the day without refreshments, he instantly repressed their feelings by declaring, 'the enemy would not dare to attack them, and if they did, would be defeated; the men who had raised the works were the best qualified to defend them; they had already learned to despise the fire of the enemy; they had the merit of the labor, and should enjoy the honor of the victory.' " These two declarations had the effect which might naturally be supposed: the one to create a trepidation in young and inexperienced soldiers, and prevent them going into action, in which they were told by their general they were to be defeated; the other, to retain them where they were, await the approaching danger, and defend their works to the last extremity, with the assurance of victory. The one, if not the suggestion of fear, was to the last degree imprudent and injudicious; the other, the most gallant, and has placed its author, for his conduct on that day, first among his countrymen.—



Washington's conduct at Braddock's defeat will not compare with it.

Anonymous writers and village editors have, since Dearborn's account, written and published often repeated statements, to lessen the weight of his account, without facts to support them. One publication appeared in a Boston periodical of 1818, and republished in the "New World," New York, 1841. Who the author was, is unknown. The object is to demolish Dearborn, prevent his being elected Governor of Massachusetts, and excite Gen. Putnam's descendants to resent everything said against their ancestor. He does not doubt *General* Dearborn's "personal veracity," but denies that *General* Dearborn is the person talking; but *Captain* Dearborn. That *General* Dearborn, in 1818, is not bound to relate truly what *Captain* Dearborn saw in 1775, although the *general* and *captain* are one and the same man, not possessing two distinct natures or intelligences. He further says, "General Dearborn probably knows that Col. Prescott and Gen. Putnam kept up a friendly acquaintance during their lives." General Dearborn nor the writer of the above sentence ever had any such knowledge as is implied. Had such been the fact, the writer could have given it, as Prescott and Putnam both had sons living when he wrote. But this fact is assumed to lessen the weight of the uniform and constant statement of Col. Prescott; and no one ever doubted his veracity, "that Putnam's conduct during the action and retreat was such that he ought to have been shot." The writer



further states, that the British pursued our troops over Bunker Hill, the Neck, and to Winter Hill, where Putnam met them and drove them back under cover of their ships—a mis-statement in every part. The writer at last agrees with Dearborn, and says the battle should be called “Prescott’s Battle.” But Dearborn’s great offence, in the opinion of the anonymous writer, is, he wrote “voluntarily and without necessity.” The venerable Marshall wrote voluntarily and without necessity, when he said the disastrous affair at Brooklyn Heights occurred, or were greatly aggravated by Gen. Putnam’s total neglect of Washington’s written order to guard the avenues to his camp. This being neglected, the British columns, during the preceding night, occupied in silence and unnoticed the very position they wished. He wrote voluntarily about the capture of forts Montgomery and Clinton, in the Highlands, where Putnam commanded—when he said he had men enough to have prevented these disasters, had they been suitably arranged and disposed. A man who gives an account of how a battle is fought, is equally bound to give the true cause of its loss. Had Dearborn, in his account of the battle, given a full list of what Colonel Hamilton called his “endless blunders and caprices,” he might have been viewed as a wanton deceiver; for his account did not require any thing more than what related to Putnam’s conduct on the day of the battle of Breed’s Hill. Had he withheld the cause of the loss of the battle, his narrative would have been incomplete, and unsatisfactory.

Without taking into consideration the weight of testimony in favor of Gen. Dearborn's account, it may well be asked what possible *motive* could he have had for stating a falsehood respecting a transaction which he saw. He was more than sixty-five years of age when he made the statement, had fought his way from a captain to commander-in-chief of the American army, as well as high and important civil offices, without a suspicion against his moral character, patriotism, or capacity. What could induce a man to make shipwreck of such a character?

This has occasioned a pause on the part of his revilers; and in charity to him, they say they are willing to believe he was superannuated and in his dotage. This is mere affectation; for after he wrote his account, he was nominated by President Monroe as a foreign minister, and unanimously approved by the senate; and nearly all of them had known him personally. This office he accepted, and performed all the duties of it to the acceptance of the government. Was Gen. Dearborn now alive, he would have less reason to complain of the treatment he has received than Washington; for the same kind of people openly aver that Washington's fear of Putnam's popularity was so great, that he feared being superceded by him; and that he was a New England man, and therefore he made the statements he did against him. Did Washington ever withhold his confidence in Greene, Lincoln, Knox, or Poor, because they were New England men?

If the minds of the people in 1775 were in the "shackles of a delusive trance" in regard to the standing and services of Gen. Putnam, a similar trance remains upon them relative to the motives of Washington's treatment of him.

That a highly respectable clergyman of Charlestown, recently delivering an address on the anniversary of Bunker's Hill battle, at the request of his fellow-townsmen, should be sneered at by a descendant of Gen. Putnam's, for giving the credit of the day to Col. Prescott, to whom all history had given it, and placing Putnam on the hill above in charge of the entrenching tools, by calling him a *young man*, was not surprising; but that Washington's motives should at this day be considered other than the purest patriotism would justify, was not expected.

The error Col. Trumbull was led into by Maj. Small, in London, in 1786, in placing Gen. Putnam in his picture, seems the true reason why he was ever thought of as an actor in the battle of Bunker's Hill. Trumbull had originally placed him in the back-ground of his picture, and made the alteration at the suggestion of Major Small. Prescott is represented as a feeble old man, with a slouched hat, plain coat and under-clothes, more like a Quaker than a soldier, and placed in a situation little corresponding with command. If a historian, or graphic historiographer does not tell the whole truth, he is bound not to violate known truth. Col. Trumbull,

years before his death, was satisfied of his mistake, and said, he believed "Putnam had little or nothing to do with the battle."

With those who will or can, with candor, examine Gen. Dearborn's account, and the evidence in support of it, he will remain the true narrator of an important event of the revolution—the veteran soldier—the honest and upright public servant—entitled to the respect of his countrymen.

THE END.

~~11 06 29 H~~  
H 62 90













**HECKMAN  
BINDERY INC.**



**JAN 90**

**N. MANCHESTER,  
INDIANA 46962**



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 698 376 A

